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DR. SEVIER.

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DR. SEVIER

A Novel

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a.L

BY

GEORGE W. CABLE

AUTHOR OF "OLD CREOLE DAYS," "THE GRANDISSIMES," "MADAME DELPHINE," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH
DAVID DOUGLAS
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DR. SEVIER.

XXXII.

A RISING STAR.

It had been many a day since Dr. Sevier had felt such pleasure as thrilled him when Richling, half beside himself with delight, ran in upon him with the news that he had found employment. Narcisse, too, was glad. He slipped down from his stool and came near enough to contribute his congratulatory smiles, though he did not venture to speak. Richling nodded him a happy how-d'ye-do, and the Creole replied by a wave of the hand.

In the Doctor's manner, on the other hand, there was a decided lack of response that made Richling check his spirits and resume more slowly—

"Do you know a man named Reisen?"

"No," said the Doctor.

"Why, he says he knows you."

"That may be."

"He says you treated his wife one night when she was very ill——"

"What name?"

"Reisen."

The Doctor reflected a moment.

"I believe I recollect him. Is he away up on Benjamin Street, close to the river, among the cotton-presses?"

"Yes. Thalia Street they call it now. He says——"

"Does he keep a large bakery?" interrupted the Doctor.

"The 'Star Bakery,'" said Richling, brightening again. "He says he knows you, and that, if you will give me just one line of recommendation, he will put me in charge of his accounts, and give me a trial. And a trial 's all I want, Doctor. I 'm not the least fearful of the result."

"Richling," said Dr. Sevier, slowly, picking up his paper-folder, and shaking it argumentatively, "where are the letters I advised you to send for?"

Richling sat perfectly still, taking a long, slow breath through his nostrils, his eyes fixed emptily on his questioner. He was thinking, away down at the bottom of his heart,—and the Doctor knew it, —that this was the unkindest question, and the most cold-blooded, that he had ever heard. The Doctor shook his paper-folder again.

"You see, now, as to the bare fact, I don't know you."

Richling's jaw dropped with astonishment. His eye lighted up resentfully. But the speaker went on—

"I esteem you highly. I believe in you. I would trust you, Richling,"—his listener remembered how the speaker *had* trusted him, and was melted, —"but as to recommending you, why, that is like going upon the witness-stand, as it were, and I cannot say that I know anything."

Richling's face suddenly flashed full of light. He touched the Doctor's hand.

"That 's it! That 's the very thing, sir! Write that!"

The Doctor hesitated. Richling sat gazing at him, afraid to move an eye lest he should lose an advantage. The Doctor turned to his desk and wrote.

On the next morning Richling did not come for his breakfast; and, not many days after, Dr. Sevier received through the mail the following letter:—

"NEW ORLEANS, *December* 2, 1857.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I 've got the place. I 'm Reisen's bookkeeper. I 'm earning my living. And I like the work. Bread, the word bread, that has so long been terrible to me, is now the sweetest word in the language. For eighteen months it was a prayer; now it 's a proclamation.

"I 've not only got the place, but I 'm going to keep it. I find I have new powers; and the first and best of them is the power to throw myself into my work and make it *me*. It 's not a task; it 's a mission. Its being bread, I suppose, makes it easier to seem so; but it should be so if it was pork and garlic, or rags and raw-hides.

"My maxim a year ago, though I didn't know it then, was to do what I liked. Now it 's to like what I do. I understand it now. And I understand now, too, that a man who expects to retain employment must yield a profit. He must be worth more than he costs. I thank God for the discipline of the last year and a half. I thank Him that I did not fall where, in my cowardice, I so often prayed to fall, into the hands of foolish benefactors. You wouldn't believe this of me, I know, but it 's true. I have been taught what life is; I never would have learned it any other way.

"And still another thing: I have been taught to know what the poor suffer. I know their feelings, their tempta-

tions, their hardships, their sad mistakes, and the frightful mistakes and oversights the rich make concerning them, and the ways to give them true and helpful help. And now, if God ever gives me competency, whether He gives me abundance or not, I know what He intends me to do. I was once, in fact and in sentiment, a brother to the rich; but I know that now He has trained me to be a brother to the poor. Don't think I'm going to be foolish. I remember that I'm brother to the rich too; but I'll be the other as well. How wisely has God—what am I saying? Poor fools that we humans are! We can hardly venture to praise God's wisdom to-day when we think we see it, lest it turn out to be only our own folly to-morrow.

"But I find I'm only writing to myself, Doctor, not to you; so I stop. Mary is well, and sends you much love.

"Yours faithfully,

"JOHN RICHLING."

"Very little about Mary," murmured Dr. Sevier. Yet he was rather pleased than otherwise with the letter. He thrust it into his breast pocket. In the evening, at his fireside, he drew it out again and re-read it.

"Talks as if he had got into an impregnable castle," thought the Doctor, as he gazed into the fire. "Book-keeper to a baker," he muttered, slowly folding the sheet again. It somehow vexed him to see Richling so happy in so low a station. But—— "It's the joy of what he has escaped *from*, not *to*," he presently remembered.

A fortnight or more elapsed. A distant relative of Dr. Sevier, a man of his own years and profession, was his guest for two nights and a day as he passed through the city, eastward, from an all-summer's study of fevers in Mexico. They were sitting at evening on opposite sides of the library fire, con-

versing in the leisurely ease of those to whom life is not a novelty.

"And so you think of having Laura and Bess come out from Charleston, and keep house for you this winter? Their mother wrote me to that effect."

"Yes," said Dr. Sevier. "Society here will be a great delight to them. They will shine. And time will be less monotonous for me. It may suit me, or it may not."

"I dare say it may," responded the kinsman, whereas in truth he was very doubtful about it.

He added something a moment later about retiring for the night, and his host had just said, "Eh?" when a slave in a five-year-old dress coat brought in the card of a person whose name was as well known in New Orleans in those days as St. Patrick's steeple or the statue of Jackson in the old Place d'Armes. Dr. Sevier turned it over and looked for a moment ponderingly upon the domestic.

The relative rose.

"You needn't go," said Dr. Sevier; but he said "he had intended," etc., and went to his chamber.

The visitor entered. He was a dark, slender, iron-grey man, of finely cut, regular features, and seeming to be much more deeply wrinkled than on scrutiny he proved to be. One quickly saw that he was full of reposing energy. He gave the feeling of your being very near some weapon of dreadful efficiency ready for instant use whenever needed. His clothing fitted him neatly; his long, grey moustache was the only thing that hung loosely about him; his boots were fine. If he had told a child that all his muscles and sinews were wrapped with

fine steel wire, the child would have believed him, and continued to sit on his knee all the same. It is said by those who still survive him, that in dreadful places and moments the flash of his fist was as quick, as irresistible, and as all-sufficient as lightning, yet that years would sometimes pass without its ever being lifted.

Dr. Sevier lifted his slender length out of his easy-chair, and bowed with severe gravity.

"Good evening, sir," he said, and silently thought, "Now, what can Smith Izard possibly want with me?"

It may have been perfectly natural that this man's presence shed off all idea of medical consultation; but why should it instantly bring to the Doctor's mind, as an answer to his question, another man as different from this one as water from fire?

The detective returned the Doctor's salutation, and they became seated. Then the visitor craved permission to ask a confidential question or two for information which he was seeking in his official capacity. His manners were a little old-fashioned, but perfect of their kind. The Doctor consented. The man put his hand into his breast pocket, and drew out a daguerreotype case, touched its spring, and as it opened in his palm extended it to the Doctor. The Doctor took it with evident reluctance. It contained the picture of a youth who was just reaching manhood. The detective spoke—

"They say he ought to look older than that now."

"He does," said Dr. Sevier.

"Do you know his name?" inquired the detective.

"No."

"What name do you know him by?"

"John Richling."

"Wasn't he sent down by Recorder Munroe, last summer, for assault, and so forth?"

"Yes. I got him out the next day. He never should have been put in."

To the Doctor's surprise the detective rose to go.

"I 'm much obliged to you, Doctor."

"Is that all you wanted to ask me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Izard, who is this young man? What has he done?"

"I don't know, sir. I have a letter from a lawyer in Kentucky who says he represents this young man's two sisters living there—half-sisters, rather—stating that his father and mother are both dead—died within three days of each other."

"What name?"

"He didn't give the name. He sent this daguerreotype, with instructions to trace up the young man, if possible. He said there was reason to believe he was in New Orleans. He said if I found him, just to see him privately, tell him the news, and invite him to come back home. But he said if the young fellow had got into any kind of trouble that might somehow reflect on the family, you know, like getting arrested for something or other, you know, or some such thing, then I was just to drop the thing quietly, and say nothing about it to him, or anybody else."

"And doesn't that seem a strange way to manage a matter like that—to put it into the hands of a detective?"

"Well, I don't know," said Mr. Izard. "We're used to strange things, and this isn't so very strange. No, it's very common. I suppose he knew that if he gave it to me it would be attended to in a quiet and innocent sort o' way. Some people hate mighty bad to get talked about. Nobody's seen that picture but you and one 'aid,' and just as soon as he saw it he said, 'Why, that's the chap that Dr. Sevier took out of the Parish Prison last September.' And there won't anybody else see it."

"Don't you intend to see Richling?" asked the Doctor, following the detective toward the door.

"I don't see as it would be any use," said the detective, "seeing he's been sent down, and so on. I'll write to the lawyer and state the facts, and wait for orders."

"But do you know how slight the blame was that got him into trouble here?"

"Yes. The 'aid' who saw the picture told me all about that. It was a shame. I'll say so. I'll give all the particulars. But I tell you, I just guess —they'll drop him."

"I dare say," said Dr Sevier.

"Well, Doctor," said Mr. Izard, "hope I haven't annoyed you."

"No," replied the Doctor.

But he had; and the annoyance had not ceased to be felt when, a few mornings afterward, Narcisse suddenly doubled—trebled it by saying—

"Doctah Seveeah,"—it was a cold day, and the young Creole stood a moment with his back to the office fire, to which he had just given an energetic and prolonged poking,—"a man was yeh to see you

name' Bison. 'E want' to see you about Mistoo 'Itchlin'."

The Doctor looked up with a start, and Narcisse continued—

"Mistoo 'Itchlin' is wuckin' in 'is employment. I think 'e's please' with 'im."

"Then why does he come to see me about him?" asked the Doctor, so sharply that Narcisse shrugged as he replied—

"Reely, I cann' tell you; but thass one thing, Doctah, I dunno if you 'ave notiz: the worl' halways take a gweat deal of welfa'e in a man w'en 'e's 'ising. I do that myseff. Some'ow I canr' 'e'p it." This bold speech was too much for him. He looked down at his symmetrical legs and went back to his desk.

The Doctor was far from reassured. After a silence he called out—

"Did he say he would come back?" A knock at the door arrested the answer, and a huge, wide, broad-faced German entered diffidently. The Doctor recognised Reisen. The visitor took off his flour-dusted hat and bowed with great deference.

"Toc-tor," he softly drawled, "I yoost taught I trop in on you to say a verte to you apowt teh chung yentleman vot you hef rickomendet to me."

"I didn't recommend him to you, sir. I wrote you distinctly that I did not feel at liberty to recommend him."

"Tat iss teh troot, Toctor Tseweer; tat iss teh ectsectly troot. Shtill I taught I 'll yoost trop in on you to say a verte to you,—Toctor,—apowt Mister——" He hung his large head at one side to remember.

"Richling," said the Doctor, impatiently.

"Yes, sir. Apowt Mr. Richlun. I heff a tiffi-culdy to rigolict naymps. I yoost taught I voot trop in und trop a verte to you apowt Mr. Richlun, vot maypy you titn't herr udt before, yet."

"Yes," said the Doctor, with ill-concealed contempt. "Well, speak it out, Mr. Reisen; time is precious."

The German smiled, and made a silly gesture of assent.

"Yes, udt is brecious. Shtill I taught I voot take enough time to yoost trop in undt say to you tat I heffent het Mr. Richlun in my etsteplitchmendt a veek undtil I finte owdt someting apowt him, tot, uf you het a-knowdt ud, voot hef mate your letter maypy a little tifferendt written, yet."

Now, at length, Dr. Sevier's annoyance was turned to dismay. He waited in silence for Reisen to unfold his enigma, but already his resentment against Richling was gathering itself for a spring. To the baker, however, he betrayed only a cold hostility.

"I kept a copy of my letter to you, Mr. Reisen, and there isn't a word in it which need have misled you, sir."

The baker waved his hand amicably.

"Sure, Toctor Tseweer, I toandt hef nutting to gomblain akinst teh vertes of tat letter. You voss mighty puttickly. Ovver, shtill, I hef sumpting to tell you vot ef you het a-knowdt udt pefore you writed tose vertes, alreatty, t'ey voot a little tifferendt pin."

"Well, sir, why don't you tell it?"

Reisen smiled. "Tat iss teh ectsectly vot I am

coing to too. I yoost taught I 'll trop in undt tell you, Toc—tor, tat I heffent het Mr. Richlun in my etsteplitchmendt a veek undtil I findte owdt tat he 's a—berfect—tressure."

Doctor Sevier started half up from his chair, dropped into it again, wheeled half away, and back again with the blood surging into his face, and exclaimed—

"Why, what do you mean by such drivelling nonsense, sir? You've given me a positive fright!" He frowned the blacker as the baker smiled from ear to ear.

"Vy, Toctor, I hope you ugscooce me! I yoost taught you voot like to herr udt. Undt Missis Reisen sayce, 'Reisen, you yoost co undt tell um.' I taught udt voot pe blessant to you to know tatt you hett sendt me teh fynust pisness mayn I effer het apowdt me. Undt uff he iss onnust he iss a berfect tressure, undt uff he ain't a berfect tressure," —he smiled anew, and tendered his capacious hat to his listener,—"you yoost kin take tiss, Toctor, undt kip udt undt vare udt! Toctor, I vish you a merrah Chris'mus!"

XXXIII.

BEES, WASPS, AND BUTTERFLIES.

THE merry day went by. The new year, 1858, set in. Everything gathered momentum. There was a panic and a crash. The brother-in-law of sister Jane—he whom Dr. Sevier met at that quiet dinner party—struck an impediment, stumbled, staggered, fell under the feet of the racers, and crawled away minus not money and credit only, but all his philosophy about helping the poor, maimed in spirit, his pride swollen with bruises, his heart and his speech soured beyond all sweetening.

Many were the wrecks. But over their *débris*, Mercury and Venus—the busy season and the gay season—ran lightly, hand in hand. Men getting money and women squandering it. Whole nights in the ball-room. Gold pouring in at the hopper and out at the spout—Carondelet Street emptying like a yellow river into Canal Street. Thousands for vanity; thousands for pride; thousands for influence and for station; thousands for hidden sins; a slender fraction for the wants of the body; a slenderer for the cravings of the soul. Lazarus paid to stay away from the gate. John the Baptist

in raiment of broadcloth, a circlet of white linen about his neck, and his meat strawberries and ice-cream. The lower classes mentioned mincingly; awkward silences or visible wincings at allusions to death, and converse on eternal things banished as if it were the smell of cabbage. So looked the gay world, at least, to Doctor Sevier.

He saw more of it than had been his wont for many seasons. The two young lady cousins whom he had brought and installed in his home thirsted for that gorgeous, nocturnal moth life in which no thirst is truly slaked, and dragged him with them into the iridescent, gas-lighted spider-web of society.

"Now, you know you like it!" they said.

"A little of it, yes. But I don't see how you can like it, who virtually live in *it* and upon it. Why, I would as soon try to live upon cake and candy!"

"Well, we can live very nicely upon cake and candy," retorted they.

"Why, girls, it 's no more life than spice is food. What lofty motive—what earnest, worthy object——"

But they drowned his homily in a carol, and ran away arm in arm to dress for another ball. One of them stopped in the door with an air of mock bravado—

"What do we care for lofty motives or worthy objects!"

A smile escaped from him as she vanished. His condemnation was flavoured with charity. "It 's their mating season," he silently thought, and, not knowing he did it, sighed.

"There come Dr. Sevier and his two pretty cousins," was the ball-room whisper. "Beautiful girls—rich widower without children—great catch. *Passé*, how? Well, may be so; not as much as he makes himself out, though." "*Passé*, yes," said a merciless belle to a blade of her own years; "a man of strong sense is *passé* at any age." Sister Jane's name was mentioned in the same connection, but that illusion quickly passed. The cousins denied indignantly that he had any matrimonial intention. Somebody dissipated the rumour by a syllogism: "A man hunting a second wife always looks like a fool; the Doctor doesn't look a bit like a fool; *ergo*——"

He grew very weary of the giddy rout, standing in it like a rock in a whirlpool. He did rejoice in the Carnival, but only because it was the end.

"Pretty? yes, as pretty as a bonfire," he said. "I can't enjoy much fiddling while Rome is burning."

"But Rome isn't always burning," said the cousins.

"Yes, it is! Yes, it is!"

The wickeder of the two cousins breathed a penitential sigh, dropped her bare, jewelled arms out of her cloak, and said—

"Now tell us *once* more about Mary Richling." He had bored them to death with Mary.

Lent was a relief to all three. One day, as the Doctor was walking along the street, a large hand grasped his elbow and gently arrested his steps. He turned.

"Well, Reisen, is that you?"

The baker answered with his wide smile. "Yes, Toctor, tat iss me, sure. You titn't tink udt iss Mr. Richlun, tit you?"

"No. How is Richling?"

"Vell, Mr. Richlun kitten along so-o-o-so-o-o. He iss not ferra shtrong; ovver he vurks like a shteam-inchyine."

"I haven't seen him for many a day," said Dr. Sevier.

The baker distended his eyes, bent his enormous digestive apparatus forward, raised his eyebrows, and hung his arms free from his sides. "He toandt kit a minudt to shpare in teh tswendy-four hourss. Sumptimes he sayss, 'Mr. Reisen, I can't shtop to talk mit you.' Sindts Mr. Richlun pin py my etsteplitchmendt, I tell you teh troot, Toctor Tseweer, I am yoost meckin' monneh hayndt ofer fist!" He swung his chest forward again, drew in his lower regions, revolved his fists around each other for a moment, and then let them fall open at his sides, with the added assurance, "Now you kott teh ectsectly troot."

The Doctor started away, but the baker detained him by a touch—

"You toandt kott enna verte to sendt to Mr. Richlun, Toctor?"

"Yes. Tell him to come and pass an hour with me some evening in my library."

The German lifted his hand in delight.

"Vy, tot 's yoost teh dting! Mr. Richlun alvayss pin sayin', 'I vish he aysk me come undt see um;' undt I sayss, 'You holdt shtill, yet, Mr. Richlun;

teh next time I see um I make um aysk you.' Vell, now, titn't I tunned udt?" He was happy.

"Well, ask him," said the Doctor, and got away.

"No fool is an utter fool," pondered the Doctor, as he went. Two friends had been kept long apart by the fear of each, lest he should seem to be setting up claims based on the past. It required a simpleton to bring them together.

XXXIV.

TOWARDS THE ZENITH.

"RICHLING, I am glad to see you!"

Dr. Sevier had risen from his luxurious chair beside a table, the soft downward beams of whose lamp partly showed, and partly hid, the rich appointments of his library. He grasped Richling's hand, and with an extensive stride drew forward another chair on its smooth-running castors.

Then inquiries were exchanged as to the health of one and the other. The Doctor, with his professional eye, noticed, as the light fell full upon his visitor's buoyant face, how thin and pale he had grown. He rose again, and stepping beyond Richling with a remark, in part complimentary and in part critical, upon the balmy April evening, let down the sash of a window where the smell of honeysuckles was floating in.

"Have you heard from your wife lately?" he asked, as he resumed his seat.

"Yesterday," said Richling. "Yes, she 's very well; been well ever since she left us. She always sends love to you."

"Hum," responded the physician. He fixed his

eyes on the mantel and asked abstractedly, "How do you bear the separation?"

"Oh!" Richling laughed, "not very heroically. It's a great strain on a man's philosophy."

"Work is the only antidote," said the Doctor, not moving his eyes.

"Yes, so I find it," answered the other. "It's bearable enough while one is working like mad; but sooner or later one must sit down to meals, or lie down to rest, you know——"

"Then it hurts," said the Doctor.

"It's a lively discipline," mused Richling.

"Do you think you learn anything by it?" asked the other, turning his eyes slowly upon him. "That's what it means, you notice."

"Yes, I do," replied Richling, smiling; "I learn the very thing I suppose you're thinking of—that separation isn't disruption, and that no pair of true lovers are quite fitted out for marriage until they can bear separation if they must."

"Yes," responded the physician; "if they can muster the good sense to see that, they'll not be so apt to marry prematurely. I needn't tell you I believe in marrying for love; but these needs-must marriages are so ineffably silly. You 'must' and you 'will' marry, and 'nobody shall hinder you!' And you do it! And in three or four or six months"—he drew in his long legs energetically from the hearth-pan—"*death* separates you!—death, sometimes, resulting directly from the turn your haste has given to events! Now, where is your 'must' and 'will'?" He stretched his legs out again, and laid his head on his cushioned chair-back.

"I have made a narrow escape," said Richling.

"I wasn't so fortunate," responded the Doctor, turning solemnly toward his young friend. "Richling, just seven months after I married Alice, I buried her. I'm not going into particulars—of course; but the sickness that carried her off was distinctly connected with the haste of our marriage. Your Bible, Richling, that you lay such store by, is right; we should want things as if we didn't want them. That isn't the quotation exactly, but it's the idea. I swore I couldn't and wouldn't live without her; but, you see, this is the fifteenth year that I have had to do it."

"I should think it would have unmanned you for life," said Richling.

"It made a man of me! I've never felt young a day since, and yet I've never seemed to grow a day older. It brought me all at once to my full manhood. I have never consciously disputed God's arrangements since. The man who does is only a wayward child."

"It's true," said Richling, with an air of confession, "it's true;" and they fell into silence.

Presently, Richling looked around the room. His eyes brightened rapidly as he beheld the ranks and tiers of good books. He breathed an audible delight. The multitude of volumes rose in the old-fashioned way, in ornate cases of dark wood from floor to ceiling, on this hand, on that, before him, behind; some in gay covers—green, blue, crimson—with gilding and embossing; some in the sumptuous leathers of France, Russia, Morocco, Turkey;

others in worn attire, battered and venerable, dingy but precious, the grey heads of the council.

The two men rose and moved about among those silent wits and philosophers, and, from the very embarrassment of the inner riches, fell to talking of letter-press and bindings, with may be some effort on the part of each to seem the better acquainted with Caxton, the Elzevirs, and other like immortals. They easily passed to a competitive enumeration of the rare books they had seen or not seen here and there in other towns and countries. Richling admitted he had travelled, and the conversation turned upon noted buildings and famous old nooks in distant cities where both had been. So they moved slowly back to their chairs, and stood by them, still contemplating the books. But as they sank again into their seats, the one thought which had fastened itself in the minds of both found fresh expression.

Richling began smilingly, as if the subject had not been dropped at all: "I oughtn't to speak as if I didn't realise my good fortune, for I do."

"I believe you do," said the Doctor, reaching toward the fire-irons.

"Yes. Still, I lose patience with myself to find myself taking Mary's absence so hard."

"All hardships are comparative," said the Doctor.

"Certainly they are," replied Richling. "I lie sometimes and think of men who have been political prisoners, shut away from wife and children, with war raging outside and no news coming in."

"Think of the common poor," exclaimed Dr. Sevier, — "the thousands of sailors' wives and

soldiers' wives. Where does that thought carry you?"

"It carries me," responded the other, with a low laugh, "to where I'm always a little ashamed of myself."

"I didn't mean it to do that," said the Doctor; "I can imagine how you miss your wife. I miss her myself."

"Oh, but she's here on this earth. She's alive and well. Any burden is light when I think of that —pardon me, Doctor!"

"Go on, go on. Anything you please about her, Richling." The Doctor half sat, half lay in his chair, his eyes partly closed. "Go on," he repeated.

"I was only going to say that long before Mary went away, many a time when she and I were fighting starvation at close quarters, I have looked at her and said to myself, 'What if I were in Dr. Sevier's place?' and it gave me strength to rise up and go on."

"You were right."

"I know I was. I often wake now at night and turn and find the place by my side empty, and I can hardly keep from calling her aloud. It wrenches me. But before long, I think she's no such great distance away, since we're both on the same earth together; and by-and-by she'll be here at my side, and so it becomes easy to me once more." Richling, in the self-occupation of a lover, forgot what pains he might be inflicting. But the Doctor did not wince.

"Yes," said the physician, "of course, you wouldn't want the separation to be painless; and it promises a reward, you know."

"Ah!" exclaimed Richling, with an exultant smile and motion of the head, and then dropped his eyes in meditation. The Doctor looked at him steadily.

"Richling, you've gathered some terribly hard experiences. But hard experiences are often the foundation-stones of a successful life. You can make them all profitable. You can make them draw you along, so to speak. But you must hold them well in hand, as you would a dangerous team, you know,—coolly and alertly, firmly and patiently,—and never let the reins slack till you've driven through the last gate."

Richling replied, with a pleasant nod: "I believe I shall do it. Did you notice what I wrote you in my letter? I have got the notion strongly that the troubles we have gone through, Mary and I, were only our necessary preparation—not so necessary for her as for me——"

"No," said Dr. Sevier, and Richling continued, with a smile—

"To fit us for a long and useful life, and especially a life that will be full of kind and valuable services to the poor. If that isn't what they were sent for"—he dropped into a tone of reflection—"then I don't understand them."

"And suppose you don't understand," said the Doctor, with his cold, grim look.

"Oh!" rejoined Richling, in amiable protest; "but a man would like to understand."

"Like to—yes," replied the Doctor, "but be careful. The spirit that *must* understand is the spirit that can't trust."

He paused. Presently he said, "Richling."

Richling answered by an inquiring glance.

"Take better care of your health," said the physician.

Richling smiled—a young man's answer—and rose to say good night.

XXXV.

TO SIGH, YET FEEL NO PAIN.

MRS. RILEY missed the Richlings, she said, more than tongue could tell. She had easily rented the rooms they left vacant; that was not the trouble. The new tenant was a sallow, gaunt, wind-dried seamstress of sixty, who paid her rent punctually, but who was—

"Mighty poor comp'ny to thim as's been used to the upper tin, Mr. Ristofalo."

Still she was a protection. Mrs. Riley had not regarded this as a necessity in former days, but now, somehow, matters seemed different. This seamstress had, moreover, a son of eighteen years, principally skin and bone, who was hoping to be appointed assistant hostler at the fire-engine house of "Volunteer One," and who meantime hung about Mrs. Riley's dwelling and loved to relieve her of the care of little Mike. This also was something to be appreciated. Still there was a void.

"Well, Mr. Richlin'!" cried Mrs. Riley, as she opened her parlour door in response to a knock. "Well, I'll be switched! ha, ha! I didn't think it was you at all. Take a seat and sit down!"

It was good to see how she enjoyed the visit. Whenever she listened to Richling's words she rocked in her rocking-chair vigorously, and, when she spoke, stopped its motion and rested her elbows on its arms.

"And how *is* Mrs. Richlin'? And so she sent her love to me, did she, now? The blessed angel! Now, ye're not just a-makin' that up? No, I know ye wouldn't do sich a thing as that, Mr. Richlin'. Well, you must give her mine back again. I've nobody else on e'rth to give ud to, and never will have." She lifted her nose with amiable stateliness, as if to imply that Richling might not believe this, but that it was true, nevertheless.

"You may change your mind, Mrs. Riley, some day," returned Richling, a little archly.

"Ha, ha!" She tossed her head and laughed with good-natured scorn. "Nivvur a fear o' that, Mr. Richlin'!" Her brogue was apt to broaden when pleasure pulled down her dignity. "And if I did, it wuddent be for the likes of no Italian Dago, if id 's him ye're a-dthrivin' at—not intinding anny disrespect to your friend, Mr. Richlin', and indeed I don't deny he 's a perfect gentleman.—But indeed, Mr. Richlin', I 'm just after thinkin' that you and yer lady wouldn't have no self-respect for Kate Riley if she should be changing her name."

"Still you were thinking about it," said Richling, with a twinkle.

"Ah, ha, ha! Indeed I wasn', an' ye needn' be t'rowin' anny o' yer slyness on me. Ye know ye'd have no self-respect fur me. No; now ye know ye wuddent;—wud ye?"

"Why, Mrs. Riley, of course we would. Why—why not?" He stood in the doorway, about to take his leave. "You may be sure we'll always be glad of anything that will make you the happier." Mrs. Riley looked so grave that he checked his humour.

"But in the nixt life, Mr. Richlin', how about that?"

"There? I suppose we shall simply each love all in absolute perfection. We'll——"

"We'll never know the differ," interposed Mrs. Riley.

"That's it," said Richling, smiling again. "And so I say—and I've always said—if a person *feels* like marrying again, let him do it."

"Have ye, now? Well, ye're just that good, Mr. Richlin'."

"Yes," he responded, trying to be grave, "that's about my measure."

"Would *you* do it?"

"No, I wouldn't. I couldn't. But I should like—in good earnest, Mrs. Riley, I should like, now, the comfort of knowing that you were not to pass all the rest of your days in widowhood."

"Ah! ged out, Mr. Richlin'!" She failed in her effort to laugh. "Ah! ye're sly!" She changed her attitude and drew a breath.

"No," said Richling, "no, honestly. I should feel that you deserved better at this world's hands than that, and that the world deserved better of you. I find two people don't make a world, Mrs. Riley, though often they think they do. They certainly don't when one is gone."

"Mr. Richlin'," exclaimed Mrs. Riley, drawing back and waving her hand sweetly, "stop yer

flattery! Stop ud! Ah! ye 're a-feelin' yer oats, Mr. Richlin'. An' ye 're a-showin' 'em too, ye air. Why, I herd ye was lookin' terrible, and here ye 're lookin' just splendud!"

"Who told you that?" asked Richling.

"Never mind! Never mind who he was—ha, ha, ha!" She checked herself suddenly. "Ah, me! It 's a shame for the likes o' me to be behavin' that foolish!" She put on additional dignity. "I will always be the Widow Riley." Then relaxing again into sweetness: "Marridge is a lottery, Mr. Richlin'; indeed an' it is; and ye know mighty well that he ye 're after jokin' me about is no more nor a fri'nd." She looked sweet enough for somebody to kiss.

"I don't know so certainly about that," said her visitor, stepping down upon the sidewalk, and putting on his hat. "If I may judge by——" He paused and glanced at the widow.

"Ah, now, Mr. Richlin', na-na-now, Mr. Richlin', ye daurn't say ud! Ye daurn't!" She smiled and blushed and arched her neck and rose and sank upon herself with sweet delight.

"I say, if I judge by what he has said to me," insisted Richling.

Mrs. Riley glided down across the doorstep, and, with all the insinuation of her sex and nation, demanded—

"What 'd he tell ye? Ah! he didn' tell ye nawthing! Ha, ha! there wasn' nawthing to tell!" But Richling slipped away.

Mrs. Riley shook her finger: "Ah, ye 're a wicket joker, Mr. Richlin'. I didn't think that o' the likes of a gentleman like you, annyhow!" She shook

her finger again as she withdrew into the house, smiling broadly all the way in to the cradle, where she kissed and kissed again her ruddy, chubby, sleeping boy.

Ristofalo came often. He was a man of simple words, and of few thoughts of the kind that were available in conversation; but his personal adventures had begun almost with infancy, and followed one another in close and strange succession over lands and seas ever since. He could, therefore, talk best about himself, though he talked modestly. "These things to hear would Desdemona seriously incline," and there came times when even a tear was not wanting to gem the poetry of the situation.

"And ye might have saved yerself from all that," was sometimes her note of sympathy. But when he asked how, she silently dried her eyes.

Sometimes his experiences had been intensely ludicrous, and Mrs. Riley would laugh until in pure self-oblivion she smote her thigh with her palm, or laid her hand so smartly against his shoulder as to tip him half off his seat.

"Ye didn't!"

"Yes."

"Ah! Get out wid ye, Raphael Ristofalo,—to be telling me that for the trooth!"

At one such time she was about to give him a second push, but he took the hand in his and quietly kept it to the end of his story.

He lingered late that evening, but at length took his hat from under his chair, rose, and extended his hand.

"Man alive!" she cried, "that 's my *hand*, sur, I 'd have ye to know. Begahn wid ye! Lookut heere! What 's the reason ye make it so long atween yer visits, eh? Tell me that. Ah—ah—ye 've no need fur to tell me, Mr. Ristofalo! Ah—now don't tell a lie!"

"Too busy. Come all time—wasn't too busy."

"Ha, ha! Yes, yes; ye 're too busy. Of coorse ye 're too busy. Oh yes! ye *air* too busy—a-courtin' thim I-talian froot-gerls around the Frinch Mairket. Ah! I 'll bet two bits ye 're a bouncer! Ah, don't tell me. I know ye, ye villain! Some o' thim 's a-waitin' fur ye now, ha, ha! Go! And don't ye nivver come back heere anny more. D' ye mind?"

"Aw right." The Italian took her hand for the third time and held it, standing in his simple square way before her, and wearing his gentle smile as he looked her in the eye. "Good-bye, Kate."

Her eye quailed. Her hand pulled a little helplessly, and in meek voice she said—

"That 's not right for you to do me that a-way, Mr. Ristofalo. I 've got a handle to my name, sur."

She threw some gentle rebuke into her glance, and turned it upon him. He met it with that same amiable absence of emotion that was always in his look.

"Kate too short by itself?" he asked. "Aw right; make it Kate Ristofalo."

"No," said Mrs. Riley, averting and drooping her face.

"Take good care of you," said the Italian; you and Mike. Always be kind. Good care."

Mrs. Riley turned with sudden fervour.

"Mr. Ristofalo," she exclaimed, lifting her free hand and touching her bosom with the points of her fingers, "ye don't know the hairt of a woman, surr! No-o-o, surr! It's *love* we wants! 'The hairt as has trooly loved nivvur furgits, but as trooly loves ahn to the tlose!'"

"Yes," said the Italian; "yes," nodding and ever smiling, "dass aw righ'."

But she—

"Ah! it's no use fur you to be a-talkin' an' a-pallaverin' to Kate Riley when ye don't be loving her, Mr. Ristofalo, an' ye know ye don't."

A tear glistened in her eye.

"Yes, love you," said the Italian; "course, love you."

He did not move a foot or change the expression of a feature.

"H-yes!" said the widow. "H-yes!" she panted. "H-yes, a little! A little, Mr. Ristofalo! But I want"—she pressed her hand hard upon her bosom, and raised her eyes aloft—"I want to be—h—h—h-adaured above all the e'rth!"

"Aw righ'," said Ristofalo; "yes—door above all you worth."

"Raphael Ristofalo," she said, "ye 're a-deceivin' me! Ye came heere whin nobody axed ye,—an' that ye know is a fact, surr,—an' made yerself agree'ble to a poor, unsuspectin' widdah, an' [*tears*] rabbed me o' mie hairt, ye did; whin I nivvur intinded to git married ag'in."

"Don't cry, Kate—Kate Ristofalo," quietly observed the Italian, getting an arm around her waist, and laying a hand on the farther cheek. "Kate Ristofalo."

"Shut!" she exclaimed, turning with playful fierceness, and proudly drawing back her head; "shut! Hah! It's Kate Ristofalo, is it? Ah, ye think so! Hah-h! It'll be ad least two weeks yet before the priest will be after giving you the right to call me that!"

And, in fact, an entire fortnight did pass before they were married.

XXXVI.

WHAT NAME?

RICHLING, in Dr. Sevier's library one evening in early May, gave him great amusement by an account of the Ristofalo-Riley wedding. He had attended it only the night before. The Doctor had received an invitation, but had pleaded previous engagements.

"But I am glad you went," he said to Richling; "however, go on with your account."

"Oh, I was glad to go. And I'm certainly glad I went."

Richling proceeded with the recital. The Doctor smiled. It was very droll—the description of persons and costumes. Richling was quite another than his usual restrained self this evening. Oddly enough, too, for this was but his second visit; the confinement of his work was almost like an imprisonment, it was so constant. The Doctor had never seen him in just such a glow. He even mimicked the brogue of two or three Irish gentlemen, and the soft, outlandish swing in the English of one or two Sicilians. He did it all so well, that when he gave an instance of some of the broad Hibernian repartee he had heard, the Doctor actually laughed audibly. One of

his young lady cousins on some pretext opened a door and stole a glance within to see what could have produced a thing so extraordinary.

"Come in, Laura, come in. Tell Bess to come in." The Doctor introduced Richling with due ceremony. Richling could not, of course, after this accession of numbers, go on being funny. The mistake was trivial, but all saw it. Still the meeting was pleasant. The girls were very intelligent and vivacious. Richling found a certain refreshment in their graceful manners, like what we sometimes feel in catching the scent of some long-forgotten perfume. They had not been told all his history, but had heard enough to make them curious to see and speak to him. They were evidently pleased with him, and Dr. Sevier, observing this, betrayed an air that was much like triumph. But after a while they went as they had come.

"Doctor," said Richling, smiling until Dr. Sevier wondered silently what possessed the fellow, "excuse me for bringing this here. But I find it so impossible to get to your office——" He moved nearer the Doctor's table and put his hand into his bosom.

"What's that?" asked the Doctor, frowning heavily. Richling smiled still broader than before.

"This is a statement," he said.

"Of what?"

"Of the various loans you have made me, with interest to date."

"Yes?" said the Doctor, frigidly.

"And here," persisted the happy man, straightening out a leg as he had done the first time they ever

met, and drawing a roll of notes from his pocket, "is the total amount."

"Yes?" The Doctor regarded them with cold contempt. "That's all very pleasant for you, I suppose, Richling,—shows you're the right kind of man, I suppose, and so on. I know that already, however. Now just put all that back into your pocket, for the sight of it isn't pleasant. You certainly don't imagine I'm going to take it, do you?"

"You promised to take it when you lent it."

"Humph! Well, I didn't say when."

"As soon as I could pay it," said Richling.

"I don't remember," replied the Doctor, picking up a newspaper. "I release myself from that promise."

"I don't release you," persisted Richling; "neither does Mary."

The Doctor was quiet a while before he answered. He crossed his knees, a moment after folded his arms, and presently said—

"Foolish pride, Richling."

"We know that," replied Richling; "we don't deny that that feeling creeps in. But we'd never do anything that's right if we waited for an unmixed motive, would we?"

"Then you think my motive—in refusing it—is mixed, probably."

"Ho-o-oh!" laughed Richling. The gladness within him would break through. "Why, Doctor, nothing could be more different. It doesn't seem to me as though you ever had a mixed motive."

The Doctor did not answer. He seemed to think the same thing.

"We know very well, Doctor, that if we should accept this kindness we might do it in a spirit of proper and commendable—a—humble-mindedness. But it isn't mere pride that makes us insist."

"No?" asked the Doctor, cruelly. "What is it else?"

"Why, I hardly know what to call it, except that it's a conviction that—well, that to pay is best; that it's the nearest to justice we can get, and that"—he spoke faster—"that it's simple duty to choose justice when we can and mercy when we must. There, I've hit it out!" He laughed again. "Don't you see, Doctor? Justice when we may—mercy when we must? It's your own principles!"

The Doctor looked straight at the mantelpiece as he asked—

"Where did you get that idea?"

"I don't know; partly from nowhere, and——"

"Partly from Mary," interrupted the Doctor. He put out his long white palm. "It's all right. Give me the money." Richling counted it into his hand. He rolled it up and stuffed it into his portemonnaie.

"You like to part with your hard earnings, do you, Richling?"

"Earnings can't be hard," was the reply; "it's borrowings that are hard."

The Doctor assented.

"And of course," said Richling, "I enjoy paying old debts." He stood and leaned his head in his hand with his elbow on the mantel. "But even aside from that, I'm happy."

"I see you are!" remarked the physician, emphatically, catching the arms of his chair and draw-

ing his feet closer in. "You 've been smiling worse than a boy with a love-letter."

"I've been hoping you 'd ask me what 's the matter."

"Well, then, Richling, what is the matter?"

"Mary has a daughter."

"What!" cried the Doctor, springing up with a radiant face and grasping Richling's hand in both his own.

Richling laughed aloud, nodded, laughed again, and gave either eye a quick, energetic wipe with all his fingers.

"Doctor," he said, as the physician sank back into his chair, "we want to name——" he hesitated, stood on one foot and leaned again against the shelf —"we want to call her by the name of—if we may——"

The Doctor looked up as if with alarm, and John said, timidly,—"Alice?"

Dr. Sevier's eyes—what was the matter? His mouth quivered. He nodded, and whispered huskily—

"All right."

After a long pause, Richling expressed the opinion that he had better be going, and the Doctor did not indicate any difference of conviction. At the door the Doctor asked—

"If the fever should break out this summer, Richling, will you go away?"

"No."

XXXVII.

PESTILENCE.

ON the twentieth of June 1858, an incident occurred in New Orleans which challenged special attention from the medical profession. Before the month closed there was a second, similar to the first. The press did not give such matters to the public in those days; it would only make the public—the advertising public—angry. Times have changed since—faced clear about; but at that period Dr. Sevier, who hated a secret only less than a falsehood, was right in speaking as he did.

"Now you 'll see," he said, pointing downward aslant, "the whole community stick its head in the sand!" He sent for Richling.

"I give you fair warning," he said. "It's coming."

"Don't cases occur sometimes in an isolated way without—anything further?" asked Richling, with a promptness which showed he had already been considering the matter.

"Yes."

"And might not this——"

"Richling, I give you fair warning."

"Have you sent your cousins away, Doctor?"

"They go to-morrow." After a silence the Doctor added: "I tell you now, because this is the time to decide what you will do. If you are not prepared to take all the risks and stay them through, you had better go at once."

"What proportion of those who are taken sick of it die?" asked Richling.

"The proportion varies in different seasons; say about one in seven or eight. But your chances would be hardly so good, for you're not strong, Richling, nor well either."

Richling stood and swung his hat against his knee. "I really don't see, Doctor, that I have any choice at all. I couldn't go to Mary—when she has but just come through a mother's pains and dangers—and say, 'I've thrown away seven good chances of life to run away from one bad one.' Why, to say nothing else, Reisen can't spare me." He smiled with boyish vanity.

"Oh! Richling, that's silly!"

"I—I know it," exclaimed the other, quickly; "I see it is. If he could spare me, of course he wouldn't be paying me a salary." But the Doctor silenced him by a gesture.

"The question is not whether he can spare you at all. It's simply, can you spare him?"

"Without violating any pledge, you mean," added Richling.

"Of course," assented the physician.

"Well, I can't spare him, Doctor. He has given me a hold on life, and no one chance in seven, or six, or five is going to shake me loose. Why, I tell you

I couldn't look Mary in the face. She couldn't look me in the face."

"Have your own way," responded the Doctor. "There are some things in your favour. You frail fellows often pull through easier than the big, full-blooded ones."

"Oh, it's Mary's way too, I feel certain," retorted Richling gaily, "and I venture to say——" he coughed and smiled again—"it's yours."

"I didn't say it wasn't," replied the unsmiling Doctor, reaching for a pen and writing a prescription. "Here; get that, and take it according to direction. It's for that cold."

"If I should take the fever," said Richling, coming out of a reverie, "Mary will want to come to me."

"Well, she mustn't come a step!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"You'll forbid it, will you not, Doctor? Pledge me!"

"I do better, sir; I pledge myself."

So the July suns rose up and moved across the beautiful blue sky; the moon went through all her majestic changes; on thirty-one successive midnights the Star Bakery sent abroad its grateful odours of bread, and as the last night passed into the first twinkling hour of morning the month chronicled one hundred and thirty-one deaths from yellow fever. The city shuddered because it knew and because it did not know what was in store. People began to fly by hundreds and then by thousands. Many were overtaken and stricken down as they fled. Still men plied their vocations, children played in the streets,

and the days came and went, fair, blue, tremulous with sunshine, or cool and grey and sweet with summer rain. How strange it was for nature to be so beautiful and so unmoved! By-and-by one could not look down a street on this hand or on that, but he saw a funeral. Doctors' gigs began to be hailed on the streets and to refuse to stop, and houses were pointed out that had just become the scenes of strange and harrowing episodes.

"Do you see that bakery—the 'Star Bakery?' Five funerals from that place—and another goes this afternoon."

Before this was said August had completed its record of eleven hundred deaths, and September had begun the long list that was to add twenty-two hundred more. Reisen had been the first one ill in the establishment. He had been losing friends—one every few days; and he thought it only plain duty, let fear or prudence say what they might, to visit them at their bedsides and follow them to their tombs. It was not only the outer man of Reisen, but the heart as well, that was elephantine. He had at length come home from one of these funerals with pains in his back and limbs, and the various familiar accompaniments.

"I feel right clumpsy," he said, as he lifted his great feet and lowered them into the mustard foot-bath.

"Doctor Sevier," said Richling, as he and the physician paused half-way between the sick chambers of Reisen and his wife, "I hope you 'll not think it foolhardy for me to expose myself by nursing these people——"

"No," replied the veteran in a tone of indifference,

and passed on; the tincture of self-approval that had "mixed" with Richling's motives went away to nothing.

Both Reisen and his wife recovered. But an apple-cheeked brother of the baker, still in the green cap and coat that he had come in from Germany, was struck from the first with that mortal terror which is so often an evil symptom of the disease, and died on the fifth day after his attack, in raging delirium. Ten of the workmen, bakers and others, followed him. Richling alone, of all in the establishment, while the sick lay scattered through the town on uncounted thousands of beds, and the month of October passed by, bringing death to eleven hundred more, escaped untouched of the scourge.

"I can't understand it," he said.

"Demand an immediate explanation," said Dr. Sevier, with sombre irony.

How did others fare? Ristofalo had, time and again, sailed with the fever, nursed it, slept with it. It passed him by again. Little Mike took it, lay two or three days very still in his mother's strong arms, and recovered. Madame Ristofalo had had it in "fifty-three." She became a heroic nurse to many, and saved life after life among the poor.

The trials of those days enriched John Richling in the acquaintanceship and esteem of Sister Jane's little lisping rector. And, by the way, none of those with whom Dr. Sevier dined on that darkest night of Richling's life became victims. The rector had never encountered the disease before, but when Sister Jane and the banker, and the banker's family

and friends, and thousands of others fled, he ran toward it, David-like, swordless and armourless. He and Richling were nearly of equal age. Three times, four times, and again, they met at dying beds. They became fond of each other.

Another brave nurse was Narcisse. Dr. Sevier, it is true, could not get rid of the conviction for years afterward that one victim would have lived had not Narcisse talked him to death. But in general, where there was some one near to prevent his telling all his discoveries and inventions, he did good service, and accompanied it with very chivalric emotions.

"Yesseh," he said, with a strutting attitude that somehow retained a sort of modesty, "I 'ad the gweatest success. Hah! a nuss is a nuss those time'. Only some time 'e 's not. 'Tis accawding to the povvub—what is that povvub, now, ag'in?" The proverb did not answer his call, and he waved it away. "Yesseh, eve'ybody wanting me at once —couldn' supply the deman'."

Richling listened to him with new pleasure and rising esteem.

"You make me envy you," he exclaimed honestly.

"Well, I s'pose you may say so, Mistoo 'Itchlin', faw I nevvah nuss a sing-le one w'at din paid me ten dollahs a night. Of co'se! 'Consistently, thou awt a jew'l.' It 's juz as the povvub says, 'All work an' no pay keep Jack a small boy.' An' yet," he hurriedly added, remembering his indebtedness to his auditor, "'tis aztonizhin' 'ow 'tis expensive to live. I haven' got a picayune of that money pwesently! I 'm aztonizh' myseff!"

XXXVIII.

"I MUST BE CRUEL ONLY TO BE KIND."

THE plague grew sated and feeble. One morning frost sent a flight of icy arrows into the town, and it vanished. The swarthy girls and lads that sauntered homeward behind their mothers' cows across the wide suburban stretches of marshy commons heard again the deep, unbroken, cataract roar of the reawakened city.

We call the sea cruel, seeing its waters dimple and smile where yesterday they dashed in pieces the ship that was black with men, women, and children. But what shall we say of those billows of human life, of which we are ourselves a part, that surge over the graves of its own dead with dances and laughter and many a coquetry, with panting chase for gain and preference, and pious regrets and tender condolences for the thousands that died yesterday—and need not have died?

Such were the questions Dr. Sevier asked himself as he laid down the newspaper full of congratulations upon the return of trade's and fashion's boisterous flow, and praises of the deeds of benevolence and mercy that had abounded throughout the days of anguish.

Certain currents of these human rapids had driven Richling and the Doctor wide apart. But at last, one day, Richling entered the office with a cheerfulness of countenance something overdone, and indicative to the Doctor's eye of inward trepidation.

"Doctor," he said, hurriedly, "preparing to leave the office? It was the only moment I could command——"

"Good morning, Richling."

"I've been trying every day for a week to get down here," said Richling, drawing out a paper. "Doctor——" with his eyes on the paper, which he had begun to unfold.

"Richling——" It was the Doctor's hardest voice. Richling looked up at him as a child looks at a thunder-cloud. The Doctor pointed to the document—

"Is that a subscription-paper?"

"Yes."

"You needn't unfold it, Richling." The Doctor made a little pushing motion at it with his open hand. "From whom does it come?"

Richling gave a name. He had not changed colour when the Doctor looked black, but now he did; for Dr. Sevier smiled. It was terrible.

"Not the little preacher that lisps?" asked the physician.

"He lisps sometimes," said Richling, with resentful subsidence of tone and with dropped eyes, preparing to return the paper to his pocket.

"Wait," said the Doctor, more gravely, arresting the movement with his index finger. "What is it for?"

"It 's for the aid of an asylum overcrowded with orphans in consequence of the late epidemic."

There was still a tightness in Richling's throat, a faint bitterness in his tone, a spark of indignation in his eye. But these the Doctor ignored. He reached out his hand, took the folded paper gently from Richling, crossed his knees, and, resting his elbows on them and shaking the paper in a prefatory way, spoke—

"Richling, in old times we used to go into monasteries; now we subscribe to orphan asylums. Nine months ago I warned this community that if it didn't take the necessary precautions against the foul contagion that has since swept over us, it would pay for its wicked folly in the lives of thousands and the increase of fatherless and helpless children. I didn't know it would come this year, but I knew it might come any year. Richling, we deserved it!"

Richling had never seen his friend in so forbidding an aspect. He had come to him boyishly elated with the fancied excellence and goodness and beauty of the task he had assumed, and a perfect confidence that his noble benefactor would look upon him with pride and upon the scheme with generous favour. When he had offered to present the paper to Dr. Sevier, he had not understood the little rector's marked alacrity in accepting his service. Now it was plain enough. He was well-nigh dumbfounded. The responses that came from him came mechanically, and in the manner of one who wards off unmerited buffetings from one whose unkindness may not be resented.

"You can't think that only those died who were to blame?" he asked helplessly; and the Doctor's answer came back instantly—

"Ho, no! look at the hundreds of little graves! No, sir. If only those who were to blame had been stricken, I should think the Judgment wasn't far off. Talk of God's mercy in times of health! There's no greater evidence of it than to see Him, in these awful visitations, refusing still to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty! Richling, only Infinite Mercy joined to Infinite Power, with infinite command of the future, could so forbear!"

Richling could not answer. The Doctor unfolded the paper and began to read: "'God in His mysterious providence'—O sir!"

"What!" demanded Richling.

"O sir, what a foul, false charge! There's nothing mysterious about it! We've trampled the book of Nature's laws in the mire of our streets, and dragged her penalties down upon our heads! Why, Richling,"—he shifted his attitude, and laid the edge of one hand upon the paper that lay in the other, with the air of commencing a demonstration,—"you're a Bible man, eh? Well, yes, I think you are; but I want you never to forget that the book of Nature has its commandments, too; and the man who sins against *them* is a sinner. There's no dispensation of mercy in that Scripture to Jew or Gentile, though the God of Mercy wrote it with His own finger. A community has got to know those laws and keep them, or take the consequences—and take them here and now—on this globe—*presently!*"

"You mean, then," said Richling, extending his hand for the return of the paper, "that those whose negligence filled the asylums should be the ones to subscribe."

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "yes!" drew back his hand with the paper still in it, turned to his desk, opened the list, and wrote. Richling's eyes followed the pen; his heart came slowly up into his throat.

"Why, Doc—Doctor, that's more than any one else has——"

"They've probably made some mistake," said Dr. Sevier, rubbing the blotting-paper with his finger. "Richling, do you think it's your mission to be a philanthropist?"

"Isn't it everybody's mission?" asked Richling.

"That's not what I asked you."

"But you ask a question," said Richling, smiling down upon the subscription-paper as he folded it, "that nobody would like to answer."

"Very well, then, you needn't answer. But Richling,"—he pointed his long finger to the pocket of Richling's coat, where the subscription-list had disappeared,—"this sort of work—whether you distinctly propose to be a philanthropist or not—is right, of course. It's good. But it's the mere alphabet of beneficence. Richling, whenever philanthropy takes the *guise* of philanthropy, look out. Confine your philanthropy—you can't do it entirely, but as much as you can—confine your philanthropy to the *motive*. It's the temptation of philanthropists to set aside the natural constitution of society wherever it seems out of order, and substitute some philanthropic machinery in its place.

It 's all wrong, Richling. Do as a good doctor would. Help nature."

Richling looked down askance, pushed his fingers through his hair perplexedly, drew a deep breath, lifted his eyes to the Doctor's again, smiled incredulously, and rubbed his brow.

"You don't see it?" asked the physician, in a tone of surprise.

"O Doctor,"—throwing up a despairing hand,—"we 're miles apart. I don't see how any work could be nobler. It looks to me——" Dr. Sevier interrupted.

"——From an emotional standpoint, Richling. Richling!"—he changed his attitude again,—"if you *want* to be a philanthropist, be cold-blooded."

Richling laughed outright, but not heartily.

"Well!" said his friend, with a shrug, as if he dismissed the whole matter. But when Richling moved, as if to rise, he restrained him. "Stop! I know you 're in a hurry, but you may tell Reisen to blame me."

"It 's not Reisen so much as it 's the work," replied Richling, but settled down again in his seat.

"Richling, human benevolence—public benevolence—in its beginning was a mere nun on the battle-field, binding up wounds and wiping the damp from dying brows. But since then it has had time and opportunity to become strong, bold, masculine, potential. Once it had only the knowledge and power to alleviate evil consequences; now it has both the knowledge and the power to deal with evil causes. Now, I say to you, leave this emotional

A B C of human charity to nuns and mite societies. It's a good work; let them do it. Give them money, if you can."

"I see what you mean—I think," said Richling, slowly, and with a pondering eye.

"I'm glad if you do," rejoined the Doctor, visibly relieved.

"But that only throws a heavier responsibility upon strong men, if I understand it," said Richling, half interrogatively.

"Certainly! Upon strong spirits, male or female. Upon spirits that can drive the axe low down into the causes of things, again and again and again, steadily, patiently, until at last some great evil towering above them totters and falls crashing to the earth, to be cut to pieces and burned in the fire. Richling! gather fagots for pastime if you like, though it's poor fun; but don't think that's your mission! *Don't* be a fagot-gatherer! What are you smiling at?"

"Your good opinion of me," answered Richling. "Doctor, I don't believe I'm fit for anything but a fagot-gatherer. But I'm willing to try."

"Oh, bah!" The Doctor admired such humility as little as it deserved. "Richling, reduce the number of helpless orphans! Dig out the old roots of calamity! A spoon is not what you want; you want a *mattock*. Reduce crime and vice! Reduce squalor! Reduce the poor man's death-rate! Improve his tenements! improve his hospitals! carry sanitation into his workshops! Teach the trades! Prepare the poor for possible riches, and the rich for possible poverty! Ah—ah—Richling, I preach well enough,

I think, but in practice I have missed it myself! Don't repeat my error!"

"Oh, but you haven't missed it!" cried Richling.

"Yes, but I have," said the Doctor. "Here I am, telling you to let your philanthropy be cold-blooded; why, I've always been hot-blooded."

"I like the hot best," said Richling, quickly.

"You ought to hate it," replied his friend. "It's been the root of all your troubles. Richling, God Almighty is unimpassioned. If He wasn't, He'd be weak. You remember Young's line: 'A God all mercy is a God unjust.' The time has come when beneficence, to be real, must operate scientifically, not emotionally. Emotion is good; but it must follow, not guide. Here! I'll give you a single instance. Emotion never sells where it can give: that is an old-fashioned, effete benevolence. The new, the cold-blooded, is incomparably better: it never—to individual or to community—gives where it can sell. Your instincts have applied the rule to yourself; apply it to your fellow-man."

"Ah!" said Richling, promptly, "that's another thing. It's not my business to apply it to them."

"It *is* your business to apply it to them. You have no right to do less."

"And what will men say of me?—At least—not that, but——"

The Doctor pointed upward. "They will say, 'I know thee, that thou art an hard man.'" His voice trembled. "But, Richling," he resumed with fresh firmness, "if you want to lead a long and useful

life,—you say you do,—you must take my advice; you must deny yourself for a while; you must shelve these fine notions for a time. I tell you once more, you must endeavour to re-establish your health as it was before—before they locked you up, you know. When that is done, you can commence right there if you choose; I wish you would. Give the public—sell would be better, but it will hardly buy—a prison system less atrocious, less destructive of justice, and less promotive of crime and vice than the one it has. By-the-by, I suppose you know that Raphael Ristofalo went to prison last night again?"

Richling sprang to his feet. "For what? He hasn't——"

"Yes, sir; he has discovered the man who robbed him, and has killed him."

Richling started away, but halted as the Doctor spoke again, rising from his seat and shaking out his legs.

"He's not suffering any hardship. He's shrewd, you know;—has made arrangements with the keeper by which he secures very comfortable quarters. The star-chamber, I think they call the room he is in. He'll suffer very little restraint. Good day."

He turned, as Richling left, to get his own hat and gloves. "Yes," he thought, as he passed slowly down-stairs to his carriage, "I have erred." He was not only teaching, he was learning. To fight evil was not enough. People who wanted help for orphans did not come to him—they sent. They drew back from him as a child shrinks from a soldier. Even Alice, his buried Alice, had wept with delight

when he gave her a smile, and trembled with fear at his frown. To fight evil is not enough. Everybody seemed to feel as though that were a war against himself. Oh for some one always to understand—never to fear—the frowning good intention of the lonely man!

XXXIX.

"PETTENT PRATE."

It was about the time, in January, when clerks and correspondents were beginning to write '59 without first getting it '58, that Dr. Sevier, as one morning he approached his office, noticed with some grim amusement, standing among the brokers and speculators of Carondelet Street, the baker, Reisen. He was earnestly conversing with and bending over a small, alert fellow in a rakish beaver and very smart coat, with the blue flowers of modesty bunched saucily in one button-hole.

Almost at the same moment Reisen saw the Doctor. He called his name aloud, and for all his ungainly bulk would have run directly to the carriage in the middle of the street, only that the Doctor made believe not to see, and in a moment was out of reach. But when two or three hours later the same vehicle came, tipping somewhat, sidewise against the sidewalk at the Charity Hospital gate, and the Doctor stepped from it, there stood Reisen in waiting.

"Toctor," he said, approaching and touching his hat, "I like to see you a minudt, uff you bleace, shtrict prifut."

They moved slowly down the unfrequented side-walk, along the garden wall.

"Before you begin, Reisen, I want to ask you a question. I've noticed for a month past that Mr. Richling rides in your bread-carts alongside the drivers on their rounds. Don't you know you ought not to require such a thing as that from a person like Mr. Richling? Mr. Richling's a gentleman, Reisen, and you make him mount up in those bread-carts, and jump out every few minutes to deliver bread!"

The Doctor's blood was not cold.

"Vell, now!" drawled the baker, as the corners of his mouth re'treated toward the back of his neck, "endt tat teh funn'est ting, ennahow! Vhy, tat iss yoost teh ferra ting fot I comin' to shpeak mit you apowdt udt!" He halted and looked at the Doctor to see how this coincidence struck him; but the Doctor merely moved on. "*I* toant make him too udt," he continued, starting again; "he cumps to me sindts apowdt two-o-o mundts aco—ven I shtill feelin' a liddle veak, yet, fun teh yalla-feewa—undt yoost paygs me to let um too udt. 'Mr. Richlun,' sayss I to him, 'I toandt kin untershtayndt for vot you vawnts to too sich a rítickliss, Mr. Richlun!' Ovver he sayss, 'Mr. Reisen,'—he alvays callss me 'Mister,' undt tat iss one dting in puttickly vot I alvays tit li-i-iked apowt Mr. Richlun,—'Mr. Reisen,' he sayss, 'toandt you aysk me te reason, ovver yoost let me co ahate undt too udt!' Undt I voss a coin' to kiff udt up, alretty; ovver ten cumps in *Missess* Reisen,—who iss a heap shmarter mayn as fot Reisen iss, I yoost tell you te ectsectly troot,—and she sayss, 'Reisen, you yoost tell Mr.

Richlun, Mr. Richlun, you toandt coin' to too sich a ritickliss!'"

The speaker paused for effect.

"Undt ten Mr. Richlun, he talks!—Schweedt?—O yendlemans, toandt say nutting!" The baker lifted up his palm and swung it down against his thigh with a blow that sent the flour out in a little cloud. "I tell you, Toctor Tseweer, ven tat mayn vawndts to too udt, he kin yoost talk te mo-ust like a Christun fun enna mayn I neffa he-ut in mine li-i-ife! 'Missess Reisen,' he sayss, 'I vawndts to too udt pecauce I vawndts to too udt.' Vell, how you coin' to arg-y ennating eagval mit Mr. Richlun? So teh upshodt iss he coes owdt in teh pratecawts tistripputin' te prate!" Reisen threw his arms far behind him, and bowed low to his listener.

Dr. Sevier had learned him well enough to beware of interrupting him, lest when he resumed it would be at the beginning again. He made no answer, and Reisen went on—

"Bressently——" He stopped his slow walk, brought forward both palms, shrugged, dropped them, bowed, clasped them behind him, brought the left one forward, dropped it, then the right one, dropped it also, frowned, smiled, and said—

"Bressently"—then a long silence—"effrapotty in my etsteplitchmendt"—another long pause—"hef yoost teh same ettechmendt to Mr. Richlun,"—another interval,—"tey hef yoost tso much affection fur *him*"—another silence—"ass tey hef"—another, with a smile this time—"fur—te teffle himpselluf!" An oven opened in the baker's face, and emitted a softly rattling expiration like that of a bursted

bellows. The Doctor neither smiled nor spoke. Reisen resumed—

"I seen udt. I seen udt. Ovver I toandt coult untershtayndt udt. Ovver one tay cumps in mine little poy in to me fen te pakers voss all ashleep. 'Pap-a, Mr. Richlun sayss you shouldt come into teh offuss.' I kumpt in. Mr. Richlun voss tare, shtayndting yoost so—yoost so—py teh shtofe; undt, Toctor Tseweer, I yoost tell you te ectsectly troot, he toaldt in fife minudts—six minudts—seven minudts, udt may pe—undt shoadt me how effrapotty, high undt low, little undt pick, Tom, Tick, undt Harra, pin ropping me sindts more ass fife years!"

The longest pause of all followed this disclosure. The baker had gradually backed the Doctor up against the wall, spreading out the whole matter with his great palms turned now upward and now downward, the bulky contents of his high-waisted, barn-door trousers now bulged out and now withdrawn, to be protruded yet more a moment later. He recommenced by holding out his down-turned hand some distance above the ground.

"I yoompt tot hoigh!" He blew his cheeks out, and rose a half-inch off his heels in recollection of the mighty leap. "Ovver Mr. Richlun sayss,—he sayss, 'Kip shtill, Mr. Reisen!' undt I kibt shtill."

The baker's auditor was gradually drawing him back toward the hospital gate; but he continued speaking.

"Py-undt-py, vun tay, *I* kot somedting to say to Mr. *Richlun*, yet. Undt *I* sendts vert to Mr. *Richlun* tat *he* shouldt come into teh offus. He cumps in. 'Mr. Richlun,' I sayss, sayss I to him, 'Mr. Richlun,

I kot udt!'" The baker shook his finger in Dr. Sevier's face. "'I kot udt, udt layst, Mr. Richlun! I yoost het a *suspish'n* sindts teh first tay fot I employedt you, ovver now I *know* I kot udt!' Vell, sir, he yoost turnun so rate ass a fiennen shirt!—'Mr. Reisen,' sayss he to me, 'fot iss udt fot you kot?'—Undt sayss I to him, 'Mr. Richlun, udt iss you! Udt is you fot I kot!'"

Dr. Sevier stood sphinx-like, and once more Reisen went on.

"'Yes, Mr. Richlun,'" still addressing the Doctor as though he were his book-keeper, "'I yoost layin' on my pett effra nighdt—effra nighdt, vi-i-ite ava-a-ake! undt in apowdt a veek I make udt owdt ut layst tot you, Mr. Richlun,'—I lookt um shtraight in te eye, undt he lookt me shtraight te same,—'tot, Mr. Richlun, *you*,' sayss I, 'not dtose fellehs fot pin py me sindts more ass fife yearss, but *you*, Mr. Richlun, iss teh mayn!—teh mayn fot I—kin *trust!*'" The baker's middle parts bent out, and his arms were drawn akimbo. Thus for ten seconds.

"'Undt now, Mr. Richlun, do you kot teh shtrengdt for to shtart a noo pissness?'—Pecause, Toctor, udt pin seem to me Mr. Richlun kitten more undt more shecklun, undt toandt take tot meticine fot you kif um (ovver he sayss he toos).—So ten he sayss to me, 'Mister Reisen, I am yoost so sollut undt shtrong like a pilly-coat! Fot is teh noo pissness?'—'Mr. Richlun,' sayss I, 've coin' to make pettent prate!'"

"What?" asked the Doctor, frowning with impatience and venturing to interrupt at last.

"*Pet-tent prate!*".

The listener frowned heavier and shook his head.

"*Pettent prate!*"

"Oh! patent bread; yes. Well?"

"Yes," said Reisen, "prate mate mit a mutcheen; mit copponic-essut kass into udt ploat pefore udt iss paked. I pought teh pettent tiss mawning fun a yendleman in Garontelet Shtreedt, alretty, naympt Kknox."

"And what have I to do with all this?" asked the Doctor, consulting his watch, as he had already done twice before.

"Vell," said Reisen, spreading his arms abroad, "I yoost taught you like to herr udt."

"But what do you want to see me for? What have you kept me all this time to tell me—or ask me?"

"Toctor,—you excuce me—ovver"—the baker held the Doctor by the elbow as he began to turn away—"Toctor Tseweer,"—the great face lighted up with a smile, the large body doubled partly together, and the broad left hand was held ready to smite the thigh,—"you shouldt see Mr. Richlun ven he fowndt owdt udt iss coin' to lower teh price of prate! I taught he iss coin' to kiss Mississ Reisen!"

XL.

SWEET BELLS JANGLED.

THOSE who knew New Orleans just before the civil war, even though they saw it only along its river-front from the deck of some steamboat, may easily recall a large sign painted high up on the side of the old "Triangle Building," which came to view through the dark web of masts and cordage as one drew near St. Mary's Market. "Steam Bakery," it read. And such as were New Orleans householders, or by any other chance enjoyed the experience of making their way in the early morning among the hundreds of baskets that on hundreds of elbows moved up and down along and across the quaint gaslit arcades of any of the market-houses, must remember how, about this time or a little earlier, there began to appear on one of the tidiest of bread-stalls in each of these market-houses a new kind of bread. It was a small, densely compacted loaf of the size and shape of a badly distorted brick. When broken, it divided into layers each of which showed——"teh bprindt of teh kkneading-mutcheen," said Reisen to Narcisse; "yoost like a tsoda-crecker!"

These two persons had met by chance at a coffee-

stand one beautiful summer dawn in one of the markets,—the Tréiné, most likely,—where, perched on high stools at a zinc-covered counter, with the smell of fresh blood on the right and of stale fish on the left, they had finished half their cup of *café au lait* before they awoke to the exhilarating knowledge of each other's presence.

"Yesseh," said Narcisse, "now since you 'ave wemawk the mention of it, I think I have saw that va'iety of bwead."

"Oh, surely you poundt too a-seedt udt. A uckly little prown dting——"

"But coo[illegible] well," said Narcisse.

"Yayss," drawled the baker. It was a fact that he had to admit.

"An' good flou'," persisted the Creole.

"Yayss," said the smiling manufacturer. He could not deny that either.

"An' hones' weight," said Narcisse, planting his empty cup in his saucer, with the energy of his asseveration; "an', Mr. Bison, thass a ve'y seldom thing."

"Yayss," assented Reisen, "ovver tat prate iss mighdy dtry, undt shtickin' in teh dtroat."

"No, seh!" said the flatterer, with a generous smile. "Egseuse me, I diffeh fum you. 'Tis a beaucheouz bwead. Yesseh. And eve'y loaf got the name beaucheouzly pwint on the top, with 'Patent'—sich an' sich a time. 'Tis the tooth, Mr. Bison, I 'm boun' to congwatu*late* you on that bwead."

"O-o-oh! tat iss not *mine* prate," exclaimed the baker. "'Tat iss not fun mine etsteplitchmendt. Oh no! Tatt iss te prate—I 'm yoost dtellin' you

—tat iss te prate fun tat fellah py teh Sunk-Mary's Morrikit-House! Tat's teh shteam prate.' I to-undt know for vot effrapotty puys tat prate, ennahow! Ovver you yoost vait dtill you see *mine* prate!"

"Mr. Bison," said Narcisse, "Mr. Bison,"—he had been trying to stop him and get in a word of his own, but could not,—"I don't know if you—Mr. —— Mr. Bison, in fact, you din unde'stood me. Can that be poss'ble that you din notiz that I was speaking in my i'ony about that bwead? Why, of co'se! Thass juz my i'onious cuztom, Mr. Bison. Thass one thing I dunno if you 'ave notiz about that 'steam bwead,' Mr. Bison, but with me 'that bwead always stick in my th'oat; an' yet I kin swallow mose anything, in fact. No, Mr. Bison, yo' bwead is deztyned to be the bwead; and I tell you how 'tes with me, I juz gladly eat yo' bwead eve'y time I kin git it! Mr. Bison, in fact you don't know me ve'y in*tim*itly, but you will oblige me ve'y much indeed to baw me five dollahs till tomaw—save me fum d'awing a check!"

The German thrust his hand slowly and deeply into his pocket. "I alvayss like to oplyche a yendleman,"—he smiled benignly, drew out a toothpick, and added,—"ovver I nivveh bporrah or lend to ennabodda."

"An' then," said Narcisse, promptly, "'tis imposs'ble faw anybody to be offended. Thass the bess way, Mr. Bison."

"Yayss," said the baker, "I dtink udt iss." As they were parting, he added—"Ovver you vait dtill you see *mine* prate!"

"I 'll do it, seh!—And, Mr. Bison, you muzn'

think anything about that, my not bawing that five dollars fum you, Mr. Bison, because that don't make a bit o' dif'ence ; an' thass one thing I like about you, Mr. Bison, you don't baw yo' money to eve'y Dick, Tom, an' Hawwy, do you ?"

"No, I dtoandt. Ovver, you yoost vait——"

And certainly, after many vexations, difficulties, and delays, that took many a pound of flesh from Reisen's form, the pretty, pale-brown, fragrant white loaves of "aërated bread" that issued from the Star Bakery in Benjamin Street were something pleasant to see, though they did not lower the price.

Richling's old liking for mechanical apparatus came into play. He only in the establishment thoroughly understood the new process, and could be certain of daily, or rather nightly, uniform results. He even made one or two slight improvements in it, which he contemplated with ecstatic pride, and long accounts of which he wrote to Mary.

In a generous and innocent way Reisen grew a little jealous of his accountant, and threw himself into his business as he had not done before since he was young, and in the ardour of his emulation ignored utterly a state of health that was no better because of his great length and breadth.

"Toctor Tseweer!" he said, as the physician appeared one day in his office. "Vell, now, I yoost pet finfty tawllars tat iss Mississ Reisen sendts for you tat I 'm tsick ! Ven udt iss not such a dting !" He laughed immoderately. "Ovver I 'm gladt you come, Toctor, ennahow, for you pin yoost in time to see ever'ting runnin'. I vish you yoost come undt see udt !" He grinned in his old broad way ; but

his face was anxious, and his bared arms were lean. He laid his hand on the Doctor's arm, then jerked it away, and tried to blow off the floury print of his fingers. "Come!" He beckoned. "Come; I show you somedting putiful. Toctor, I *vish* you come!"

The Doctor yielded. Richling had to be called upon at last to explain the hidden parts and processes.

"It 's yoost like putt'n' te shpirudt into teh potty," said the laughing German. "Now, tat prate kot life in udt yoost teh same like your own selluf, Doctor. Tot prate kot yoost so much sense ass Reisen kot. Ovver, Toctor—Toctor"—the Doctor was giving his attention to Richling, who was explaining something —"Toctor, toandt you come here uxpectin' to see nopoty sick, less-n udt iss Mr. Richlun." He caught Richling's face roughly between his hands, and then gave his back a caressing thwack. "Toctor, vot you dtink? Ve coin' to run teh prate-cawts mit copponic-essut kass. Tispense mit hawses!" He laughed long but softly, and smote Richling again as the three walked across the bakery-yard abreast.

"Well?" said Dr. Sevier to Richling, in a low tone, "always working toward the one happy end."

Richling had only time to answer with his eyes, when the baker, always clinging close to them, said: "Yes. If I toandt look oudt yet, he pe rich pefore Reisen."

The Doctor looked steadily at Richling, stood still, and said, "Don't hurry."

But Richling swung playfully half around on his heel, dropped his glance, and jerked his head sidewise, as one who neither resented the advice nor

took it. A minute later he drew from his breast-pocket a small thick letter stripped of its envelope, and handed it to the Doctor, who put it into his pocket, neither of them speaking. The action showed practice. Reisen winked one eye laboriously at the Doctor and chuckled.

"See here, Reisen," said the Doctor, "I want you to pack your trunk, take the late boat, and go to Biloxi or Pascagoula, and spend a month fishing and sailing."

The baker pushed his fingers up under his hat scratched his head, smiled widely, and pointed at Richling.

"Sendt him."

The Doctor went and sat down with Reisen, and used every form of inducement that could be brought to bear; but the German had but one answer: Richling, Richling, not he. The Doctor left a prescription, which the baker took until he found it was making him sleep while Richling was at work, whereupon he amiably threw it out of his window.

It was no surprise to Dr. Sevier that Richling came to him a few days later with a face all trouble.

"How are you, Richling? How's Reisen?"

"Doctor," said Richling, "I'm afraid Mr. Reisen is——" Their eyes met.

"Insane," said the Doctor.

"Yes."

"Does his wife know whether he has ever had such symptoms before—in his life?"

"She says he hasn't."

"I suppose you know his pecuniary condition perfectly; has he money?"

"Plenty."

"He'll not consent to go away anywhere, I suppose, will he?"

"Not an inch."

"There's but one sensible and proper course, Richling; he must be taken at once, by force if necessary, to a first-class insane hospital."

"Why, Doctor, why? can't we treat him better at home?"

The Doctor gave his head its well-known swing of impatience. "If you want to be *criminally* in error, try that!"

"I don't want to be in error at all," retorted Richling.

"Then don't lose twelve hours that you can save, but send him off as soon as process of court will let you."

"Will you come at once and see him?" asked Richling, rising up.

"Yes, I'll be there nearly as soon as you will. Stop; you had better ride with me; I have something special to say." As the carriage started off the Doctor leaned back in its cushions, folded his arms, and took a long, meditative breath. Richling glanced at him and said—

"We're both thinking of the same person."

"Yes," replied the Doctor; "and the same day too, I suppose; the first day I ever saw her; the only other time that we ever got into this carriage together. Hmm, hmm! With what a fearful speed time flies!"

"Sometimes," said the yearning husband, and apologised by a laugh. The Doctor grunted, looked

out the carriage window, and, suddenly turning, asked—

"Do you know that Reisen instructed his wife about six months ago, in the event of his death or disability, to place all her interests in your hands, and to be guided by your advice in everything?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Richling, "he can't do that! He should have asked my consent."

"I suppose he knew he wouldn't get it. He's a cunning simpleton."

"But, Doctor, if you knew this——" Richling ceased.

"Six months ago. Why didn't I tell you?" said the physician. "I thought I would, Richling, though Reisen bade me not, when he told me; I made no promise. But time, that you think goes slow, was too fast for me."

"I shall refuse to serve," said Richling, soliloquising aloud. "Don't you see, Doctor, the delicacy of the position?"

"Yes, I do; but you don't. Don't you see it would be just as delicate a matter for you to refuse?"

Richling pondered, and presently said, quite slowly—

"It will look like coming down out of the tree to catch the apples as they fall," he said. "Why," he added with impatience, "it lays me wide open to suspicion and slander."

"Does it?" asked the Doctor, heartlessly. "There's nothing remarkable in that. Did any one ever occupy a responsible position without those conditions?"

"But, you know, I have made some unscrupulous enemies by defending Reisen's interests."

"Um-hmm; what did you defend them for?"

Richling was about to make a reply, but the Doctor wanted none. "Richling," he said, "the most of men have burrows. They never let anything decoy them so far from those burrows but they can pop into them at a moment's notice. Do you take my meaning?"

"Oh yes," said Richling, pleasantly; "no trouble to understand you this time. I'll not run into any burrow just now. I'll face my duty, and think of Mary." He laughed.

"Excellent pastime," responded Dr. Sevier.

They rode on in silence.

"As to," began Richling again—"as to such matters as these, once a man confronts the question candidly, there is really no room, that I can see, for a man to choose; a man, at least, who is always guided by conscience."

"If there were such a man," responded the Doctor.

"True," said John.

"But for common stuff, such as you and I are made of, it must sometimes be terrible."

"I dare say," said Richling. "It sometimes requires cold blood to choose aright."

"As cold as granite," replied the other.

They arrived at the bakery.

"O Doctor," said Mrs. Reisen, proffering her hand as he entered the house, "my poor hussband iss crazy." She dropped into a chair and burst into tears. She was a large woman, with a round, red

face and triple chin, but with a more intelligent look and a better command of English than Reisen. "Doctor, I want you to cure him aas quick aas possible."

"Well, madam, of course; but will you do what I say?"

"I will, certain shure. I do it yust like you tellin' me."

The Doctor gave her such good advice as became a courageous physician.

A look of dismay came upon her. Her mouth dropped open. "Oh no, Doctor!" She began to shake her head. "I'll never do tha-at; oh no; I'll never send my poor hussband to the crazy-house! Oh no, sir; I'll do not such a thing!". There was some resentment in her emotion. Her nether lip went up like a crying babe's, and she breathed through her nostrils audibly.

"Oh yes, I know," said the poor creature, turning her face away from the Doctor's kind attempts to explain, and lifting it incredulously as she talked to the wall,—"I know all about it. I'm not a-goin' to put no sich a disgrace on my poor hussband; no, indeed." She faced around suddenly and threw out her hand to Richling, who leaned against a door twisting a bit of string between his thumbs. "Why, he wouldn't go, nohow, even if I gave my consents. You caynt coax him out of his room yet. Oh no, Doctor; it's my duty to keep him wid me, an' try to cure him first a little while here at home. That ain't no trouble to me; I don't never mind no trouble if I can be any help to my hussband." She addressed the wall again.

"Well, madam," replied the physician, with unusual tenderness of tone, and looking at Richling while he spoke, "of course you 'll do as you think best."

"Oh! my poor Reisen!" exclaimed the wife, wringing her hands.

"Yes," said the physician, rising and looking out at a window, "I 'm afraid it will be ruin to Reisen."

"No, it won't be such a thing," said Mrs. Reisen, turning this way and that in her chair as the physician moved from place to place. "Mr. Richlin'," —turning to him,—"Mr. Richlin' an' me kin run the business yust so good as Reisen." She shifted her distressed gaze back and forth from Richling to the Doctor. The latter turned to Richling—

"I 'll have to leave this matter to you."

Richling nodded.

"Where is Reisen?" asked the Doctor. "In his own room, up-stairs?" The three passed through an inner door.

XLI.

MIRAGE.

"THIS spoils some of your arrangements, doesn't it?" asked Dr. Sevier of Richling, stepping again into his carriage. He had already said the kind things concerning Reisen that physicians commonly say when they have little hope. "Were you not counting on an early visit to Milwaukee?"

Richling laughed.

"That illusion has been just a little beyond reach for months." He helped the Doctor to shut his carriage door.

"But now, of course——" said the physician.

"Of course, it's out of the question," replied Richling; and the Doctor drove away, with the young man's face in his mind bearing an expression of simple emphasis that pleased him much.

Late at night Richling, in his dingy little office, unlocked a drawer, drew out a plump package of letters, and began to read their pages—transcripts of his wife's heart, pages upon pages, hundreds of precious lines, dates crowding closely one upon another. Often he smiled as his eyes ran to and fro, or drew

a soft sigh as he turned the page, and looked behind to see if any one had stolen in and was reading over his shoulder. Sometimes his smile broadened; he lifted his glance from the sheet and fixed it in pleasant reverie on the blank wall before him. Often the lines were taken up with mere utterances of affection. Now and then they were all about little Alice, who had fretted all the night before, her gums being swollen and tender on the upper left side near the front; or who had fallen violently in love with the house-dog, by whom, in turn, the sentiment was reciprocated; or whose eyes were really getting bluer and bluer and her cheeks fatter and fatter, and who seemed to fear nothing that had existence. And the reader of the lines would rest one elbow on the desk, shut his eyes in one hand, and see the fair young head of the mother drooping tenderly over that smaller head in her bosom. Sometimes the tone of the lines was hopefully grave, discussing in the old tentative, interrogative key the future and its possibilities. Some pages were given to reminiscences—recollections of all the droll things and all the good and glad things of the rugged past. Every here and there, but especially where the lines drew toward the signature, the words of longing multiplied, but always full of sunshine; and just at the end of each letter love spurned its restraints, and rose and overflowed with sweet confessions.

Sometimes these re-read letters did Richling good; not always. Maybe he read them too often. It was only the very next time that the Doctor's carriage stood before the bakery that the departing physician turned before he re-entered the vehicle,

and—whatever Richling had been saying to him—said abruptly—

"Richling, are you falling out of love with your work?"

"Why do you ask me that?" asked the young man, colouring.

"Because I no longer see that joy of deliverance with which you entered upon this humble calling. It seems to have passed like a lost perfume, Richling. Have you let your toil become a task once more?"

Richling dropped his eyes and pushed the ground with the toe of his boot.

"I didn't want you to find that out, Doctor."

"I was afraid, from the first, it would be so," said the physician.

"I don't see why you were."

"Well, I saw that the zeal with which you first laid hold of your work was not entirely natural. It was good, but it was partly artificial. The more credit to you on that account. But I saw that by-and-by you would have to keep it up mainly by your sense of necessity and duty. 'That'll be the pinch,' I said, and now I see it's come. For a long time you idealised the work; but at last its real dulness has begun to overcome you, and you're discontented—and with a discontentment that you can't justify, can you?"

"But I feel myself growing smaller again."

"No wonder. Why, Richling, it's the discontent makes that."

"Oh no! The discontent makes me long to expand. I never had so much ambition before.

But what can I do here? Why, Doctor, I ought to be—I might be——"

The physician laid a hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Stop, Richling. Drop those phrases and give us a healthy 'I am,' and 'I must,' and 'I will.' Don't—*don't* be like so many! You're not of the many. Richling, in the first illness in which I ever attended your wife, she watched her chance and asked me privately—implored me—not to let her die, for your sake. I don't suppose that tortures could have wrung from her, even if she realised it—which I doubt—the true reason. But don't you feel it? It was because your moral nature needs her so badly. Stop—let me finish. You need Mary back here now to hold you square to your course by the tremendous power of her timid little 'don't you think?' and 'doesn't it seem?'"

"Doctor," replied Richling, with a smile of expostulation, "you touch one's pride."

"Certainly I do. You're willing enough to say that you love her and long for her, but not that your moral manhood needs her. And yet isn't it true?"

"It sha'n't be true," said Richling, swinging a playful fist: "'forewarned is forearmed:' I'll not allow it. I'm man enough for that." He laughed, with a touch of pique.

"Richling,"—the Doctor laid a finger against his companion's shoulder, preparing at the same time to leave him,—"don't be misled. A man who doesn't need a wife isn't fit to have one."

"Why, Doctor," replied Richling, with sincere

amiability, "you're the man of all men I should have picked out to prove the contrary."

"No, Richling, no. I wasn't fit, and God took her."

In accordance with Dr. Sevier's request, Richling essayed to lift the mind of the baker's wife, in the matter of her husband's affliction, to that plane of conviction where facts and not feelings should become her motive; and when he had talked until his head reeled, as though he had been blowing a fire, and she would not blaze for all his blowing—would be governed only by a stupid sentimentality; and when at length she suddenly flashed up in silly anger and accused him of interested motives; and when he had demanded instant retraction or release from her employment; and when she humbly and affectionately apologised and was still as deep as ever in hopeless, clinging sentimentalisms, repeating the dictums of her simple and ignorant German neighbours and intimates, and calling them in to argue with him, the feeling that the Doctor's exhortation had for the moment driven away came back with more force than ever, and he could only turn again to his ovens and account-books with a feeling of annihilation.

"Where am I? What am I?" Silence was the only answer. The separation that had once been so sharp a pain had ceased to cut, and was bearing down upon him now with that dull, grinding weight that does the damage in us.

Presently came another development; the lack of money, that did no harm while it was merely kept in the mind, settled down upon the heart.

"It may be a bad thing to love, but it's a good thing to have," he said, one day, to the little rector, as this friend stood by him at a corner of the high desk where Richling was posting his ledger.

"But not to seek," said the rector.

Richling posted an item and shook his head doubtingly.

"That depends, I should say, on how much one seeks it, and how much of it he seeks."

"No," insisted the clergyman. Richling bent a look of inquiry upon him, and he added—

"The principle is bad, and you know it, Richling. 'Seek ye first'—you know the text—and the assurance that follows with it—'all these things shall be added——'"

"Oh yes; but still——"

"'But still!'" exclaimed the little preacher; "why must everybody say 'but still'? Don't you see that that 'but still' is the refusal of Christians to practise Christianity?"

Richling looked, but said nothing; and his friend hoped the word had taken effect. But Richling was too deeply bitten to be cured by one or two good sayings. After a moment he said—

"I used to wonder to see nearly everybody struggling to be rich, but I don't now. I don't justify it, but I understand it. It's flight from oblivion. It's the natural longing to be seen and felt."

"Why isn't it enough to be felt?" asked the other.

"Here, you make bread and sell it. A thousand people eat it from your hand every day. Isn't that something?"

"Yes; but it's all the bread. The bread's everything; I'm nothing. I'm not asked to do or to be. I may exist or not; there will be bread all the same. I see my remark pains you, but I can't help it. You've never tried the thing. You've never encountered the mild contempt that people in case pay to those who pursue the 'industries.' You've never suffered the condescension of rank to the ranks. You don't know the smart of being only an arithmetical quantity in a world of achievements and possessions."

"No," said the preacher, "may be I haven't. But I should say you are just the sort of man that ought to come through all that unsoured and unhurt. Richling,"—he put on a lighter mood,—"you've got a moral indigestion. You've accustomed yourself to the highest motives, and now these new notions are not the highest, and you know and feel it. They don't nourish you. They don't make you happy. Where are your old sentiments? What's become of them?"

"Ah!" said Richling, "I got them from my wife. And the supply's nearly run out."

"Get it renewed!" said the little man, quickly, putting on his hat and extending a farewell hand. "Excuse me for saying so. I didn't intend it; I dropped in to ask you again the name of that Italian whom you visit at the prison—the man I promised you I'd go and talk to. Yes; Ristofalo; that's it. Good-bye."

That night Richling wrote to his wife. What he wrote goes not down here; but he felt as he wrote that his mood was not the right one, and

when Mary got the letter she answered by first mail—

"Will you not let me come to you? Is it not surely best? Say but the word, and I'll come. It will be the steamer to Chicago, railroad to Cairo, and a St. Louis boat to New Orleans. Alice will be both company and protection, and no burden at all. O my beloved husband, I am just ungracious enough to think, some days, that these times of separation are the hardest of all. When we were suffering sickness and hunger together—well, we were *together*. Darling, if you 'll just say come, I 'll come in an *instant*. Oh, how gladly! Surely, with what you tell me you 've saved, and with your place so secure to you, can't we venture to begin again? Alice and I can live with you in the bakery. O my husband, if you but say the word, a little time—a few days will bring us into your arms. And yet, do not yield to my impatience; I trust your wisdom, and know that what you decide will be best. Mother has been very feeble lately, as I have told you; but she seems to be improving, and now I see what I 've half suspected for a long time, and ought to have seen sooner, that my husband—my dear, dear husband—needs me most; and I 'm coming—I 'm *coming*, John, if you 'll only say come.—Your loving

"MARY."

XLII.

RISTOFALO AND THE RECTOR.

BE Richling's feelings what they might, the Star Bakery shone in the retail firmament of the commercial heavens with new and growing brilliancy. There was scarcely time to talk even with the tough little rector who hovers on the borders of this history, and he might have become quite an alien had not Richling's earnest request made him one day a visitor, as we have seen him express his intention of being, in the foul corridors of the Parish Prison, and presently the occupant of a broken chair in the apartment apportioned to Raphael Ristofalo and two other prisoners. "Easy little tasks you cut out for your friends," said the rector to Richling when next they met. "I got preached *to*—not to say edified. I'll share my edification with you!" He told his experience.

It was a sinister place, the prison apartment. The hand of Kate Ristofalo had removed some of its unsightly conditions and disguised others; but the bounds of the room, walls, ceiling, windows, floor, still displayed, with official unconcern, the grime and decay that is commonly thought good

enough for men charged, rightly or wrongly, with crime.

The clergyman's chair was in the centre of the floor. Ristofalo sat facing him a little way off on the right. A youth of nineteen sat tipped against the wall on the left, and a long-limbed, big-boned, red-shirted young Irishman occupied a poplar table, hanging one of his legs across a corner of it and letting the other down to the floor. Ristofalo remarked, in the form of polite acknowledgment, that the rector had preached to the assembled inmates of the prison on the Sunday previous.

"Did I say anything that you thought was true?" asked the minister.

The Italian smiled, in the gentle manner that never failed him.

"Didn't listen much," he said. He drew from a pocket of his black velveteen pantaloons a small crumpled tract. It may have been a favourite one with the clergyman, for the youth against the wall produced its counterpart, and the man on the edge of the table lay back on his elbow, and, with an indolent stretch of the opposite arm and both legs, drew a third one from a tin cup that rested on a greasy shelf behind him. The Irishman held his between his fingers and smirked a little toward the floor. Ristofalo extended his toward the visitor, and touched the caption with one finger: "Mercy Offered."

"Well," asked the rector, pleasantly, "what's the matter with that?"

"Is no use yeh. Wrong place—this prison."

"Um-hm," said the tract distributor, glancing

down at the leaf and smoothing it on his knee while he took time to think. "Well? Why shouldn't mercy be offered here?"

"No," replied Ristofalo, still smiling; "ought offer justice first."

"Mr. Preacher," asked the young Irishman, bringing both legs to the front, and swinging them under the table, "d' ye vote?"

"Yes; I vote."

"D' ye call yerself a cidizen—with a cidizen's rights an' djuties?"

"I do."

"That 's right." There was a deep sea of insolence in the smooth-faced, red-eyed smile that accompanied the commendation. "And how manny times have ye bean in this prison?"

"I don't know; eight or ten times. That rather beats you, doesn't it?"

Ristofalo smiled, the youth uttered a high rasping cackle, and the Irishman laughed the heartiest of all.

"A little," he said; "a little. But nivver mind. Ye say ye 've been here eight or tin times; yes. Well, now, will I tell ye what I 'd do afore and iver I 'd kim back here again,—if I was you, now? Will I tell ye?"

"Well, yes," replied the visitor, amiably; "I 'd like to know."

"Well, surr, I 'd go to the mair of this city, and to the judge of the criminal coort, and to the gov'ner of the Sta-ate, and to the ligislatur, if needs be, and I 'd say, 'Gintlemin, I can't go back to that prison! There is more crimes a-bein' committed

by the people outside ag'in the fellies in theyre than—than—than the—the fellies in theyre has committed ag'in the people! I'm ashamed to preach theyre! I'm afeered to do ud!'" The speaker slipped off the table, upon his feet. "'There's murrder a-goun' on in theyre! There's more murrder a-bein' done in theyre nor there is outside! Justice is a-bein' murdered theyre ivery hour of day and night!'"

He brandished his fist with the last words, but dropped it at a glance from Ristofalo, and began to pace the floor along his side of the room, looking with a heavy-browed smile back and forth from one fellow-captive to the other. He waited till the visitor was about to speak, and then interrupted, pointing at him suddenly.

"Ye're a Prodez'n preacher! I'll bet ye fifty dollars ye have a rich cherch! Full of 'leadin' cidizens!'"

"You're correct."

"Well, I'd go to thim! I'd go an'—an'—an' I'd say, 'Dawn't ye nivver ax me to go into that place ag'in a-pallaverin' about mercy, until ye gid ud chaynged from the hell on earth it is to a house of justice, wheyre min gits the sintences that the coorts decrees!' *I* don't complain in here. *He* don't complain," pointing to Ristofalo; "ye'll nivver hear a complaint from him. But go look in that yaird!" He threw up both hands with a grimace of disgust—"Aw!"—and ceased again, but continued his walk, looked at his fellows, and resumed.

"*I* listened to yer sermon. I heerd ye talkin'

about the souls of uz. Do ye think ye kin make anny of thim min believe ye cayre for the souls of uz whin ye do nahthing for the *bodies* that 's before yer eyes tlothed in rrags and stairved, and made to sleep on beds of brick and stone, and to receive a hundred abuses a day that was nivver intended to be a pairt of *anny*body's sintence—and manny of 'm not tried yit, an' nivver a-goun' to have annythin' proved ag'in 'm? How *can* ye come offerin' uz merrcy? For ye don't come out o' the tloister, like a poor Cat'lic priest or Sister. Ye come rright out o' the hairt o' the community that 's a-committin' more crimes ag'in uz in here than all of uz together has iver committed outside. Aw!—Bring uz a better airticle of yer own justice ferst—I doan't cayre how *crool* it is, so ut 's *justice*—an' *thin* preach about God's mercy. I 'll listen to ye."

Ristofalo had kept his eyes for the most of the time on the floor, smiling sometimes more and sometimes less. Now, however, he raised them and nodded to the clergyman. He approved all that had been said. The Irishman went and sat again on the table and swung his legs. The visitor was not allowed to answer before, and must answer now. He would have been more comfortable at the rectory.

"My friend," he began, "suppose, now, I should say that you are pretty nearly correct in everything you 've said."

The prisoner, who, with hands grasping the table's edge on either side of him, was looking down at his swinging brogans, simply lifted his lurid eyes without raising his head, and nodded. "It would

be right," he seemed to intimate, "but nothing great."

"And suppose I should say that I'm glad I've heard it, and that I even intend to make good use of it."

His hearer lifted his head, better pleased, but not without some betrayal of the distrust which a lower nature feels toward the condescensions of a higher. The preacher went on—

"Would you try to believe what I have to add to that?"

"Yes, I'd try," replied the Irishman, looking facetiously from the youth to Ristofalo. But this time the Italian was grave, and turned his glance expectantly upon the minister, who presently replied—

"Well, neither my church nor the community has sent me here at all."

The Irishman broke into a laugh.

"Did God send ye?" He looked again to his comrades, with an expanded grin. The youth giggled. The clergyman met the attack with serenity, waited a moment, and then responded—

"Well, in one sense, I don't mind saying—yes."

"Well," said the Irishman, still full of mirth, and swinging his legs with fresh vigour, "He'd aht to 'a' sint ye to the legislatur!"

"I'm in hopes He will," said the little rector; "but"—checking the Irishman's renewed laughter—"tell me, why should other men's injustice in here stop me from preaching God's mercy?"

"Because it's pairt *your* injustice! Ye *do* come from yer church, an' ye *do* come from the com-

munity, an' ye can't deny ud, an' ye 'd ahtn't to be comin' in here with yer sweet tahk and yer eyes tight shut to the crimes that 's bein' committed agin uz for want of an outcry against 'em by you preachers an' prayers an' thract disthributors!" The speaker ceased, and nodded fiercely. Then a new thought occurred to him, and he began again abruptly—

"Look ut here! Ye said in yer serrmon that as to Him"—he pointed through the broken ceiling—"we 're all criminals alike, didn't ye?"

"I did," responded the preacher, in a low tone.

"Yes," said Ristofalo; and the boy echoed the same word.

"Well, thin, what rights has some to be out an' some to be in?"

"Only one right that I know of," responded the little man; "still, that is a good one."

"And that is——?" prompted the Irishman.

"Society's right to protect itself."

"Yes," said the prisoner, "to protect itself. Thin what right has it to keep a prison like this, where every man an' woman as goes out of ud goes out a blacker devil, and a cunninger devil, and a more dangerous devil nor when he came in. Is that anny protection? Why shouldn't such a prison tumble down upon the heads of thim as built it? Say!"

"I expect you 'll have to ask somebody else," said the rector. He rose.

"Ye 're not a-goun'?" exclaimed the Irishman, in broad affectation of surprise.

"Yes."

"Ah! come now! Ye 're not goun' to be beat

that a-way by a wild Mick o' the woods?" He held himself ready for a laugh.

"No, I'm coming back," said the smiling clergyman, and the laugh came.

"That's right! But"—as if the thought was a sudden one—"I'll be dead by thin, willn't I? Of coorse I will."

"Yes?" rejoined the clergyman. "How's that?"

The Irishman turned to the Italian.

"Mr. Ristofalo, we're a-goun' to the pinitintiary, ain't we?"

Ristofalo nodded.

"Of coorse we air! Ah! Mr. Prèechur, that's the place!"

"Worse than this?"

"Worse? Oh no! It's better. This is slow death, but that's quick and short—and sure. If it don't git ye in five year', ye're an allygatur. This place? It's heaven to ud!"

XLIII.

SHALL SHE COME OR STAY ?

RICHLING read Mary's letter through three times without a smile. The feeling that he had prompted the missive—that it was partly his—stood between him and a tumult of gladness. And yet when he closed his eyes he could see Mary, all buoyancy and laughter, spurning his claim to each and every stroke of the pen. It was all hers, all !

As he was slowly folding the sheet, Mrs. Reisen came in upon him. It was one of those excessively warm spring evenings that sometimes make New Orleans fear it will have no May. The baker's wife stood with her immense red hands thrust into the pockets of an expansive pinafore, and her three double chins glistening with perspiration. She bade her manager a pleasant good evening.

Richling inquired how she had left her husband.

"Kviet, Mr. Richlin', kviet. Mr. Richlin', I pelief Reisen kittin' petter. If he toan't kittin' petter, how come he 'ss every dtay a little more kvieter, and sit' still and toan't say nutting to nopotty ?"

"Mrs. Reisen, my wife is asking me to send for

her"—Richling gave the folded letter a little shake as he held it by one corner—"to come down here and live again."

"Now, Mr. Richlin'!"

"Yes."

"Well, I will shwear!" She dropped into a seat. "Right in de mekinning o' summer-time! Vell, vell, vell! Andt you dtolt me Mrs. Richlin' iss a sentsible voman! Vell, I toan't belief dat I efer see a young voman w'at aindt de pickest kindt o' fool apowt her husspandt! Vell, vell!—Andt she comin' dtown heah 'n' choost kittin' all your money shpent, 'n' den her mudter kittin' vorse 'n' she got 'o goin' pack akin!"

"Why, Mrs. Reisen," exclaimed Richling, warmly, "you speak as if you didn't want her to come." He contrived to smile as he finished.

"Vell,—uff—course! *You* toan't vant her to come, tdo you?"

Richling forced a laugh.

"Seems to me 'twould be natural if I did, Mrs. Reisen. Didn't the preacher say, when we were married, 'Let no man put asunder'?"

"Oh, now, Mr. Richlin', dthere aindt nopotty a-koin' to put you undter!—'less'n it's your vife. Vot she vants to come dtown for? Toan't I takin' koot care you?" There was a tear in her eye as she went out.

An hour or so later the little rector dropped in.

"Richling, I came to see if I did any damage last time I was here. My own words worried me."

"You were afraid," responded Richling, "that I

would understand you to recommend me to send for my wife."

"Yes."

"I didn't understand you so."

"Well, my mind 's relieved."

"Mine isn't," said Richling. He laid down his pen and gathered his fingers around one knee. "Why shouldn't I send for her?"

"You will, some day."

"But I mean now."

The clergyman shook his head pleasantly.

"I don't think that 's what you mean."

"Well, let that pass. I know what I do mean. I mean to get out of this business. I've lived long enough with these savages." A wave of his hand indicated the whole *personnel* of the bread business.

"I would try not to mind their savageness, Richling," said the little preacher, slowly. "The best of us are only savages hid under a harness. If we're not we've somehow made a loss." Richling looked at him with amused astonishment, but he persisted. "I'm in earnest! We've had something refined out of us that we shouldn't have parted with. Now, there 's Mrs. Reisen. I like her. She 's a good woman. If the savage can stand you, why can't you stand the savage?"

"Yes, true enough. Yet—well, I must get out of this, anyway."

The little man clapped him on the shoulder.

"*Climb* out. See here, you Milwaukee man,"—he pushed Richling playfully,—"What are *you* doing with these Southern notions of ours about the 'yoke of menial service,' anyhow?"

"I was not born in Milwaukee," said Richling.

"And you'll not die with these notions, either," retorted the other. "Look here, I am going. Good-bye. You've got to get rid of them, you know, before your wife comes. I'm glad you're not going to send for her now."

"I didn't say I wasn't."

"I wouldn't."

"Oh, you don't know what you'd do," said Richling.

The little preacher eyed him steadily for a moment, and then slowly returned to where he still sat holding his knee.

They had a long talk in very quiet tones. At the end the rector asked—

"Didn't you once meet Dr. Sevier's two nieces—at his house?"

"Yes," said Richling.

"Do you remember the one named Laura? The dark, flashing one?"

"Yes."

"Well,—oh, pshaw! I could tell you something funny, but I don't care to do it."

What he did not care to tell was that she had promised him five years before to be his wife any day when he should say the word. In all that time, and this very night, one letter, one line almost, and he could have ended his waiting.

They smiled together. "Well, good-bye again. Don't think I'm always going to persecute you with my solicitude."

"I'm not worth it," said Richling, slipping slowly down from his high stool and letting the little man out into the street.

A little way down the street some one coming out of a dark alley just in time to confront the clergyman extended a hand in salutation.

"Good evening, Mr. Blank."

He took the hand. It belonged to a girl of eighteen, bareheaded and barefooted, holding in the other hand a small oil-can. Her eyes looked steadily into his.

"You don't know me," she said, pleasantly.

"Why, yes, now I remember you. You're Maggie."

"Yes," replied the girl. "Don't you recollect—in the mission-school? Don't you recollect you married me and Larry? That's two years ago." She almost laughed out with pleasure.

"And where's Larry?"

"Why, don't you recollect? He's on the sloop-o'-war *Preble*." Then she added more gravely: "I ain't seen him in twenty months. But I know he's all right. I ain't a-scared about *that*—only if he's alive and well; yes, sir. Well, good evenin', sir. Yes, sir; I think I'll come to the mission nex' Sunday—and I'll bring the baby, will I? All right, sir. Well, so long, sir. Take care of yourself, sir."

What a word that was! It echoed in his ear all the way home. "Take care of *yourself*." What boast is there for the civilisation that refines away the unconscious heroism of the unfriended poor?

He was glad he had not told Richling all his little secret. But Richling found it out later from Dr. Sevier.

XLIV.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

THREE days Mary's letter lay unanswered. About dusk of the third, as Richling was harrying across the yard of the bakery on some errand connected with the establishment, a light touch was laid upon his shoulder, a peculiar touch, which he recognised in an instant. He turned in the gloom and exclaimed, in a whisper—

"Why, Ristofalo!"

"Howdy?" said Raphael, in his usual voice.

"Why, how did you get out?" asked Richling. "Have you escaped?"

"No. Just come out for little air. Captain of the prison and me. Not captain, exactly; one of the keepers. Goin' back some time to-night." He stood there in his old-fashioned way, gently smiling, and looking as immovable as a piece of granite. "Have you heard from wife lately?"

"Yes," said Richling. "But—why—I don't understand. You and the jailer out together?"

"Yes, takin' a little stroll 'round. He's out there in the street. You can see him on doorstep 'cross yonder. Pretty drunk, eh?" The Italian's smile

broadened for a moment, then came back to its usual self again. "I jus' lef' Kate at home. Thought I'd come see you a little while."

"Return calls?" suggested Richling.

"Yes, return call. Your wife well?"

"Yes. But—why, this is the drollest——" He stopped short, for the Italian's gravity indicated his opinion that there had been enough amusement shown. "Yes, she's well, thank you. By the by, what do you think of my letting her come out here now and begin life over again? Doesn't it seem to you it's high time, if we're ever going to do it at all?"

"What you think?" asked Ristofalo.

"Well, now, you answer my question first."

"No, you answer me first."

"I can't. I haven't decided. I've been three days thinking about it. It may seem like a small matter to hesitate so long over——" Richling paused for his hearer to dissent.

"Yes," said Ristofalo, "pretty small." His smile remained the same. "She ask you? Reckon you put her up to it, eh?"

"I don't see why you should reckon that," said Richling, with resentful coldness.

"I dunno," said the Italian,—"thought so—that's the way fellows do sometime." There was a pause. Then he resumed: "I wouldn't let her come yet. Wait."

"For what?"

"See which way the cat goin' to jump."

Richling laughed unpleasantly.

"What do you mean by that?" he inquired.

"We goin' to have war," said Raphael Ristofalo.

"Ho, ho, ho! Why, Ristofalo, you were never more mistaken in your life!"

"I dunno," replied the Italian, sticking in his tracks; "think it pretty certain. I read all the papers every day; nothin' else to do in Parish Prison. Think we see war nex' winter."

"Ristofalo, a man of your sort can hardly conceive the amount of bluster this country can stand without coming to blows. We Americans are not like you Italians."

"No," responded Ristofalo, "not much like." His smile changed peculiarly. "Wasn't for Kate, I go to Italia now."

"Kate and the Parish Prison," said Richling.

"Oh,"—the old smile returned,—"I get out that place any time I want."

"And you'd join Garibaldi, I suppose." The news had just come of Garibaldi in Sicily.

"Yes," responded the Italian. There was a twinkle deep in his eyes as he added: "I know Garibaldi."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Sailed under him when he was ship-cap'n. He knows me."

"And I dare say he'd remember you," said Richling, with enthusiasm.

"He remember me," said the quieter man. "Well, —must go. Good e'nin'. Better tell yo' wife wait a while."

"I—don't know. I'll see. Ristofalo——"

"What?"

"I want to quit this business."

"Better not quit. Stick to one thing."

"But you never did that. You never did one thing twice in succession."

"There's heap o' diff'ence."

"I don't see it. What is it?"

But the Italian only smiled and shrugged, and began to move away. In a moment he said—

"You see, Mr. Richlin', you sen' for yo' wife, you can't risk change o' business. You change business, you can't risk sen' for yo' wife. Well, good night."

Richling was left to his thoughts. Naturally they were of the man whom he still saw, in his imagination, picking his jailer up off the door-step and going back to prison. Who could say that this man might not any day make just such a lion's leap into the world's arena as Garibaldi had made, and startle the nations as Garibaldi had done? What was that red-shirted scourge of tyrants that this man might not be? Sailor, soldier, hero, patriot, prisoner? See Garibaldi; despising the restraints of law; careless of the simplest conventionalities that go to make up an honest gentleman; doing both right and wrong—like a lion; everything in him leonine. All this was in Ristofalo's reach. It was all beyond Richling's. Which was best, the capability or the incapability? It was a question he would have liked to ask Mary.

Well, at any rate, he had strength now for one thing—"one pretty small thing." He would answer her letter. He answered it, and wrote: "Don't come; wait a little while." He put aside all those sweet lovers' pictures that had been floating before his eyes by night and day, and bade her stay until

the summer, with its risks to health, should have passed, and she could leave her mother well and strong.

It was only a day or two afterward that he fell sick. It was provoking to have such a cold and not know how he caught it, and to have it in such fine weather. He was in bed some days, and was robbed of much sleep by a cough. Mrs. Reisen found occasion to tell Dr. Sevier of Mary's desire, as communicated to her by "Mr. Richlin'," and of the advice she had given him.

"And he didn't send for her, I suppose."

"No, sir."

"Well, Mrs. Reisen, I wish you had kept your advice to yourself." The Doctor went to Richling's bedside.

"Richling, why don't you send for your wife?"

The patient floundered in the bed and drew himself up on his pillow.

"O Doctor, just listen!" He smiled incredulously. "Bring that little woman and her baby down here just as the hot season is beginning?" He thought a moment, and then continued: "I'm afraid, Doctor, you're prescribing for home-sickness. Pray don't tell me that's my ailment."

"No, it's not. You have a bad cough that you must take care of; but still, the other is one of the counts in your case, and you know how quickly Mary and—the little girl would cure it."

Richling smiled again.

"I can't do that, Doctor; when I go to Mary, or send for her on account of home-sickness, it must be hers, not mine."

"Well, Mrs. Reisen," said the Doctor outside the street door, "I hope you'll remember my request."

"I'll tdo udt, Dtoctor," was the reply, so humbly spoken that he repented half his harshness.

"I suppose you've often heard that 'you can't make a silk purse of a sow's ear,' haven't you?" he asked.

"Yes; I pin right often heeard udt." She spoke as though she was not wedded to any inflexible opinion concerning the proposition.

"Well, Mrs. Reisen, as a man once said to me, 'neither can you make a sow's ear out of a silk purse.'"

"Vell, to be cettaintly!" said the poor woman, drawing not the shadow of an inference; "how kin you?"

"Mr. Richling tells me he will write to Mrs. Richling to prepare to come down in the fall."

"Vell!" exclaimed the delighted Mrs. Reisen, in her husband's best manner, "t'at's te etsectly I atwised him!" And, as the Doctor drove away, she rubbed her mighty hands around each other in restored complacency. Two or three days later she had the additional pleasure of seeing Richling up and about his work again. It was upon her motherly urging that he indulged himself, one calm, warm afternoon, in a walk in the upper part of the city.

XLV.

NARCISSE WITH NEWS.

It was very beautiful to see the summer set in. ...es everywhere. You looked down a street, and, ...ss it were one of the two broad avenues where ...ly street-cars ran, it was pretty sure to be so ...hed with boughs that, down in the distance, ...as left but a narrow streak of vivid blue sky ...iddle. Well-nigh every house had its garden, ... garden its countless flowers. The dark ...ran to show its growing weight of fruit- ... was hiding in its thorny interior the ...of yonder mocking-bird, silently foraging ...a the sunny grass. The yielding branches ... privet were bowed down with their plumy ...cles, and swayed heavily from side to side, ...ank with gladness and plenty. Here the peach was beginning to droop over a wall. There, and yonder, again beyond, ranks of fig-trees, that had so muffled themselves in their foliage that not the nakedness of a twig showed through, had yet more figs than leaves. The crisp, cool masses of the pomegranate were dotted with scarlet flowers. The Cape jasmine wore hundreds of her own white

favours, whose fragance forerun the sight. Every breath of air was a new perfume. Roses, an innumerable host, ran a fairy riot about all grounds, and clambered from the lowest door-step to the highest roof. The oleander, wrapped in one great garment of red blossoms, nodded in the sun, and stirred and winked in the faint stirrings of the air. The pale banana slowly fanned herself with her own broad leaf. High up against the intense sky, its hard burnished foliage glittering in the sunlight, the magnolia spread its dark boughs, adorned with the queenly white flowers. Not a bird nor an insect seemed unmated. The little wren stood and sang to his sitting wife his loud ecstatic song made of her own name,—Matilda, Urilda, Lucinda, Adeline, Madeline, Caroline, or Melinda, as the might be,—singing as though every bone in tiny body were a golden flute. The humming hung on invisible wings, and twittered with as they feasted on woodbine and honeysuckle. pigeon on the roof-tree cooed and wheeled mate, and swelled his throat, and bowed and walked with a smiting step, and his purpling neck, and wheeled and bowed wheeled again. Pairs of butterflies rose in upward flight, fluttered about each other in amorous strife, and drifted away in the upper air. And out of every garden came the voices of little children at play, the blessedest sound on earth.

"O Mary, Mary! why should two lovers live apart on this beautiful earth? Autumn is no time for mating. Who can tell what autumn will bring?"

The reverie was interrupted.

"Mistoo 'Itchlin', 'ow you enjoyin' yo' 'ealth in that beaucheouz weatheh juz at the pwesent? Me, I'm well. Yes, I'm always well, in fact. At the same time, nevvatheless, I fine myseff slightly sad. I s'pose 'tis natu'al—a man what love the 'itings of Lawd By'on as much as me. You know, of co'se, the melancholic intelligens?"

"No," said Richling; "has any one——"

"Lady By'on, seh. Yesseh. 'In the mids' of life——' you know where we ah, Mistoo 'Itchlin', I su-pose?"

"Is Lady Byron dead?"

"Yesseh." Narcisse bowed solemnly. "Gone, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. Since the seventeenth of last; Yesseh. 'Kig the bucket,' as the povvub say." He showed an extra band of black drawn neatly around his new straw hat. "I thought it but p'opeh to put some moaning—as a species of twibute." He restored the hat to his head. "You like the tas'e of that, Mistoo 'Itchlin'?"

Richling could but confess the whole thing was delicious.

"Yo' 'umble servan', seh," responded the smiling Creole, with a flattered bow. Then, assuming a gravity becoming the historian, he said—

"In fact, 'tis a gweat mistake, that statement that Lawd By'on evva qua'led with his lady, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. But I s'pose you know 'tis but a slandeh of the pwess. Yesseh. As, faw instance, thass anotheh slandeh of the pwess, that the delegates qua'led ad the Chawleston convention. They only pwetend to qua'l; so, by that way, to mizguide those A*bo*lish-nists. Mistoo 'Itchlin', I am p'ojecting to

'ite some obitua' 'emawks about that Lady By'on, but I scass know w'etheh to 'ite them in the poetic style aw in the p'osaic. Which would you conclude, Mistoo 'Itchlin'?"

Richling reflected with downcast eyes.

"It seems to me," he said, when he had passed his hand across his mouth in apparent meditation and looked up, "seems to me I'd conclude both, without delay."

"Yes? But accawding to what fawmule, Mistoo 'Itchlin'? 'Ay, 'tis theh is the 'ub,' in fact, as Lawd By'on says. It is to migs the two style' that you advise?"

"That's the favourite method," replied Richling.

"Well, I dunno 'ow 'tis, Mistoo 'Itchlin', but I fine the moze facil'ty in the poetic. 'Tis t'ue, in the poetic you got to look out concehning the *'ime*. You got to keep the eye skin' faw it, in fact. But in the p'osaic, on the cont'a-ay, 'tis juz the opposite; you got to keep the eye skin' faw the *sense*. Yesseh. Now, if you migs the two style'—well—'ow's that, Mistoo 'Itchlin', if you migs them? Seem' to me I dunno."

"Why, don't you see?" asked Richling. "If you mix them, you avoid both necessities. You sail triumphantly between Scylla and Charybdis without so much as skinning your eye."

Narcisse looked at him a moment with a slightly searching glance, dropped his eyes upon his own beautiful feet, and said, in a meditative tone—

"I believe you co'ect." But his smile was gone, and Richling saw that he had ventured too far.

"I wish my wife was here," said Richling; "she might give you better advice than I."

"Yes," replied Narcisse, "I believe you co'ect agin, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. 'Tis but since yeste'd'y that I juz 'appen to liea' Dr. Seveah d'op a saying 'esembling to that. Yesseh, she 's a ve'y 'emawkable, Mistoo 'Itchlin'."

"Is that what Dr. Sevier said?" Richling began to fear an ambush.

"No, seh. What the Doctah say—'twas me'ly to 'emawk in his jocose way. You know the Doctah 's lill callous, jocose way, Mistoo 'Itchlin'."

He waved either hand outward gladsomely.

"Yes," said Richling, "I 've seen specimens of it."

"Yesseh. He was ve'y complimenta'y, in fact, the Doctah. 'Tis the trooth. He says, 'She 'll make a man of Witchlin', if anythin' can.' Juz in his jocose way, you know."

The Creole's smile had returned in concentrated sweetness. He stood silent, his face beaming with what seemed his confidence that Richling would be delighted. Richling recalled the physician's saying concerning this very same little tale-bearer—that he carried his nonsense on top and his good sense underneath.

"Dr. Sevier said that, did he?" asked Richling after a time.

"'Tis the vehbatim, seh. Convussing to yo' 'eve'end fwend. You can ask him; he will co'obo'ate me in fact. Well, Mistoo 'Itchlin', it supp'ise me you not tickle at that. Me, I may say, I wish *I* had a wife to make a man out of *me*."

"I wish you had," said Richling. But Narcisse smiled on.

"Well, *au 'evoi'*." He paused an instant with an earnest face. "Pehchance I 'll meet you this evening, Mistoo 'Itchlin'? Faw doubtless, like myseff, you will assist at the gweat a-ally faw the Union, the Const'ution, and the enfo'cemen' of the law. Dr. Seveah will addwess."

"I don't know that I care to hear him," replied Richling.

"Goin' to be a gwan' out-po'-ing, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. Citizens of Noo 'Leans without the leas' 'espec' faw fawmeh polly-tickle diff'ence. Also fiah-works. 'Come one, come all,' as says the gweat Scott—includin' yo'seff, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. No? Well, *au 'evoi'*, Mistoo 'Itchlin'."

XLVI.

A PRISON MEMENTO.

THE political pot began to seethe. Many yet will remember how its smoke went up. The summer — summer of 1860 — grew fervent. Its breath became hot and dry. All observation—all thought—turned upon the fierce campaign. Discussion dropped as to whether Heenan would ever get that champion's belt, which even the little rector believed he had fairly won in the international prize-ring. The news brought by each succeeding European steamer of Garibaldi's splendid triumphs in the cause of a new Italy, the fierce rattle of partisan warfare in Mexico, that seemed almost within hearing, so nearly was New Orleans concerned in some of its movements,—all things became secondary and trivial beside the developments of a political canvass in which the long foreseen, long dreaded issues between two parts of the nation were at length to be made final. The conventions had met, the nominations were complete, and the clans of four parties and fractions of parties were "meeting," and "rallying," and "uprising," and "outpouring."

All life was strung to one high pitch. This contest was everything — nay, everybody — men, women, and children. They were all for the Constitution; they were all for the Union; and each, even Richling, for the enforcement of—his own ideas. On every bosom, "no matteh the sex," and no matter the age, hung one of those little round, ribanded medals, with a presidential candidate on one side and his vice-presidential man Friday on the other. Needless to say that Ristofalo's Kate, instructed by her husband, imported the earliest and many a later invoice of them, and distributing her peddlers at choice thronging-places, "everlastin'ly," as she laughingly and confidentially informed Dr. Sevier, "raked in the sponjewlicks." They were exposed for sale on little stalls on populous sidewalks and places of much entry and exit.

The post-office in those days was still on Royal Street, in the old Merchants' Exchange. The small hand-holes of the box-delivery were in the wide tesselated passage that still runs through the building from Royal Street to Exchange Alley. A keeper of one of these little stalls established himself against a pillar just where men turned into and out of Royal Street, out of or into this passage. One day, in this place, just as Richling turned from a delivery window to tear the envelope of a letter bearing the Milwaukee stamp, his attention was arrested by a man running by him toward Exchange Alley, pale as death, and followed by a crowd that suddenly broke into a cry, a howl, a roar—"Hang him! Hang him!"

"Come!" said a small, strong man, seizing Rich-

ling's arm and turning him in the common direction. If the word was lost on Richling's defective hearing, not so the touch; for the speaker was Ristofalo. The two friends ran with all their speed through the passage and out into the alley. A few rods away, the chased wretch had been overtaken, and was made to face his pursuers. When Richling and Ristofalo reached him, there was already a rope about his neck.

The Italian's leap, as he closed in upon the group around the victim, was like a tiger's. The men he touched did not fall; they were rather hurled, driving backward those whom they were hurled against. A man levelled a revolver at him; Richling struck it a blow that sent it over twenty men's heads. A long knife flashed in Ristofalo's right hand. He stood holding the rope in his left, stooping slightly forward and darting his eyes about as if selecting a victim for his weapon. A stranger touched Richling from behind, spoke a hurried word in Italian, and handed him a huge dirk. But in that same moment the affair was over. There stood Ristofalo, gentle, self-contained, with just a perceptible smile turned upon the crowd, no knife in his hand, and beside him the slender, sinewy, and keen grey eye of Smith Izard.

He was addressing the crowd. While he was speaking, half a score of police came from as many directions. When he had finished, he waved his hand at the mass of heads.

"Stand back. Go about your business." And they began to go. He laid a hand upon the rescued stranger, and addressed the police.

"Take this rope off. Take this man to the station, and keep him till it's safe to let him go."

The explanation by which he had so quickly pacified the mob was a simple one. The rescued man was a seller of campaign medals. That morning, in opening a fresh supply of his little stock, he failed to perceive that, among a lot of "Breckenridge and Lane" medals, there had crept in one of Lincoln. That was the sum of his offence. The mistake had occurred in the Northern factory. Of course, if he did not intend to sell Lincoln medals, there was no crime.

"Don't I tell you?" said the Italian to Richling, as they were walking away together. "Bound to have war; is already begin-n."

"It began with me the day I got married," said Richling.

Ristofalo waited some time, and then asked—

"How?"

"I shouldn't have said so," replied Richling; "I can't explain."

"Thass all right," said the other. And, a little later: "Smith Izard call' you by name. How he know yo' name?"

"I can't imagine!"

The Italian waved his hand.

"Thass all right too; nothin' to me." Then, after another pause: "Think you saved my life to-day."

"The honours are easy," said Richling.

He went to bed again for two or three days. He liked it little when Dr. Sevier attributed the

illness to a few moments' violent exertion and excitement.

"It was bravely done, at any rate, Richling," said the Doctor.

"*That* it was!" said Kate Ristofalo, who had happened to call to see the sick man at the same hour. "Doctor, ye're mighty right! Ha!"

Mrs. Reisen expressed a like opinion, and the two kind women met the two men's obvious wish by leaving the room.

"Doctor," said Richling at once, "the last time you said it was love-sickness; this time you say it's excitement; at the bottom it isn't either. Will you please tell me what it really is? What is this thing that puts me here on my back this way?"

"Richling," replied the Doctor slowly, "if I tell you the honest truth, it began in that prison."

The patient knit his hands under his head and lay motionless and silent.

"Yes," he said after a time. And by-and-by again: "Yes; I feared as much. And can it be that my *physical* manhood is going to fail me at such a time as this?" He drew a long breath, and turned restively in the bed.

"We'll try to keep it from doing that," replied the physician. "I've told you this, Richling, old fellow, to impress upon you the necessity of keeping out of all this hubbub—this night-marching and mass-meeting and exciting nonsense."

"And am I always—always to be blown back—blown back this way?" said Richling, half to himself, half to his friend.

"There, now," responded the Doctor, "just stop

talking entirely. No, no; not always blown back. A sick man always thinks the present moment is the whole boundless future. Get well. And to that end possess your soul in patience. No newspapers. Read your Bible. It will calm you. I've been trying it myself." His tone was full of cheer, but it was also so motherly, and the touch so gentle with which he put back the sick man's locks—as if they had been a lad's—that Richling turned away his face with chagrin.

"Come!" said the Doctor more sturdily, laying his hand on the patient's shoulder. "You'll not lie here more than a day or two. Before you know it, summer will be gone, and you'll be sending for Mary."

Richling turned again, put out a parting hand, and smiled with new courage.

XLVII.

NOW I LAY ME—

TIME may drag slowly, but it never drags backward. So the summer wore on, Richling following his physician's directions; keeping to his work only—out of public excitements and all overstrain; and to every day, as he bade it good-bye, his eager heart, lightened each time by that much, said: "When you come around again next year, Mary and I will meet you hand in hand." This was *his* excitement, and he seemed to flourish on it.

But day by day, week by week, the excitement of the times rose. Dr. Sevier was deeply stirred, and ever on the alert, looking out upon every quarter of the political sky, listening to the rising thunder, watching the gathering storm. There could hardly have been any one more completely engrossed by it. If there was, it was his bookkeeper. It wasn't so much the Constitution that enlisted Narcisse's concern; nor yet the Union, which seemed to him safe enough; much less did the desire to see the enforcement of the laws consume him. Nor was it altogether the "'oman candles" and the "'ockets;" but the rhetoric.

'Ah, the "'eto'ic!" He bathed, he paddled, dived, splashed, in a surf of it.

"Doctah,"—shaking his finely turned shoulders into his coat and lifting his hat toward his head,—"I had the honah, and at the same time the pleasu', to yeh you make a shawt speech last evening. I was p'oud to yeh yo' bunning eloquence, Doctah,—if you 'll allow. Yesseh. Eve'ybody said 'twas the moze bilious effo't of the o'-casion."

Dr. Sevier actually looked up and smiled, and thanked the happy young man for the compliment.

"Yesseh," continued his admirer, "I nevveh flatteh. I give the me'-it where the me'-it lies. Well, seh, we juz make that welkin 'ing faw joy when you finally stop' at the en'. Pehchance you heard my voice among that sea of head'? But I doubt—in such a vas' up'ising—so many imposing pageant', in fact,—and those 'ocket' exploding in the staw-y heaven', as they say. I think I like that exp'ession I saw on the newzpapeh, wheh it says: 'Long biffo the appointed owwa, thousan' of flashing tawches and tas'eful t'anspa'encies with divuz devices, whose blazing effulgence turn' day into night.' Thass a ve'y talented style, in fact. Well, *au 'evoi'*, Doctah. I'm going ad the—an' thass anotheh thing I like—'tis faw the ladies to 'ing bells that way on the balconies. Because Mr. Bell and Eve'ett is name *bell*, and so is the *bells* name' juz the same way, and so they 'ing the *bells* to signify. I had to elucidate that to my hant. Well, *au 'evoi'*, Doctah."

The Doctor raised his eyes from his letter-writing. The young man had turned, and was actually going

out without another word. What perversity moved the physician no one will ever know; but he sternly called—

"Narcisse!"

The Creole wheeled about on the threshold—

"Yesseh?"

The Doctor held him with a firm, grave eye, and slowly said—

"I suppose before you return you will go to the post-office." He said nothing more,—only that, just in his jocose way,—and dropped his eyes again upon his pen. Narcisse gave him one long black look, and silently went out.

But a sweet complacency could not stay long away from the young man's breast. The world was too beautiful; the white, hot sky above was in such fine harmony with his puffed lawn shirt-bosom and his white linen pantaloons, bulging at the thighs and tapering at the ankles; and at the corner of Canal and Royal Streets he met so many members of the Yancey Guards and Southern Guards and Chalmette Guards and Union Guards and Lane Dragoons and Breckenridge Guards and Douglas Rangers and Everett Knights, and had the pleasant trouble of stepping aside and yielding the pavement to the far-spreading crinoline. Oh, life was one scintillating cluster-breastpin of ecstasies! And there was another thing—General William Walker's filibusters! Royal Street, St. Charles, the rotunda of the St. Charles Hotel, were full of them.

It made Dr. Sevier both sad and fierce to see what hold their lawless enterprise took upon the youth of the city. Not that any great number were

drawn into the movement, least of all Narcisse; but it captivated their interest and sympathy, and heightened the general unrest, when calmness was what every thoughtful man saw to be the country's greatest need.

An incident to illustrate the Doctor's state of mind—

It occurred one evening in the St. Charles rotunda. He saw some citizens of high standing preparing to drink at the bar with a group of broad-hatted men, whose bronzed foreheads and general out-of-door mien hinted rather ostentatiously of Honduras and Ruatan Island. As he passed close to them, one of the citizens faced him blandly, and unexpectedly took his hand, but quickly let it go again. The rest only glanced at the Doctor, and drew nearer to the bar.

"I trust you're not unwell, Doctor," said the sociable one, with something of a smile, and something of a frown, at the tall physician's gloomy brow.

"I am well, sir."

"I—didn't know," said the man again, throwing an aggressive resentment into his tone; "you seemed preoccupied."

"I was," replied the Doctor, returning his glance with so keen an eye that the man smiled again appeasingly. "I was thinking how barely skin-deep civilisation is."

The man ha-ha'd artificially, stepping backward as he said: "That's so!" He looked after the departing Doctor an instant, and then joined his companions.

Richling had a touch of this contagion. He

looked from Garibaldi to Walker and back again, and could not see any enormous difference between them. He said as much to one of the bakery's customers, a restaurateur with a well-oiled tongue, who had praised him for his intrepidity in the rescue of the medal-peddler, which, it seem', he had witnessed. With this praise still upon his lips, the caterer walked with Richling to the restaurant door, and detained him there to enlarge upon the subject of Spanish-American misrule, and the golden rewards that must naturally fall to those who should supplant it with stable government. Richling listened and replied, and replied again and listened; and presently the restaurateur startled him with an offer to secure him a captain's commission under Walker. He laughed incredulously; but the restaurateur, very much in earnest, talked on; and by littles, but rapidly, Richling admitted the value of the various considerations urged. Two or three months of rapid adventure; complete physical renovation—of course—natural sequence; the plaudits of a grateful people; maybe fortune also, but at least a certainty of finding the road to it; all this to meet Mary with next fall.

"I 'm in a great hurry just now," said Richling; "but I 'll talk about this thing with you again to-morrow or next day," and so left.

The restaurateur turned to his head waiter, stuck his tongue in his cheek, and pulled down the lower lid of an eye with his forefinger. He meant to say he had been lying for the pure fun of it.

When Dr. Sevier came that afternoon to see Reisen—of whom there was now but little left, and

that little unable to leave the bed—Richling took occasion to raise the subject that had entangled his fancy. He was careful to say nothing of himself or the restaurateur, or anything, indeed, but a timid generality or two. But the Doctor responded with a clear, sudden energy that, when he was gone, left Richling feeling painfully blank, and yet unable to find anything to resent except the Doctor's superfluous—as he thought, quite superfluous—mention of the island of Cozumel.

However, and after all, that which for the most part kept the public mind heated was, as we have said, the political campaign. Popular feeling grew tremulous with it as the landscape did under the burning sun. It was a very hot summer. Not a good one for feeble folk; and one early dawn poor Reisen suddenly felt all his reason come back to him, opened his eyes, and lo! he had crossed the river in the night, and was on the other side.

Dr. Sevier's experienced horse halted of his own will to let a procession pass. In the carriage at its head the physician saw the little rector, sitting beside a man of German ecclesiastical appearance. Behind it followed a majestic hearse, drawn by black-plumed and caparisoned horses—four of them. Then came a long line of red-shirted firemen; for he in the hearse had been an "exempt." Then a further line of big-handed, white-gloved men in beavers and regalias; for he had been also a Freemason and an Oddfellow. Then another column, of emotionless-visaged German women all in bunchy black gowns, walking out of time to the solemn roll and pulse of the muffled drums, and the brazen

peals of the funeral march. A few carriages closed the long line. In the first of them the waiting Doctor marked, with a sudden understanding of all, the pale face of John Richling, and by his side the widow who had been forty years a wife,—weary and red with weeping. The Doctor took off his hat.

XLVIII.

RISE UP, MY LOVE, MY FAIR ONE.

THE summer at length was past, and the burning heat was over and gone. The days were refreshed with the balm of a waning October. There had been no fever. True, the nights were still aglare with torches, and the street echoes kept awake by trumpet notes and huzzas, by the tramp of feet and the delicate hint of the bell-ringing; and men on the stump and off it, in the "wigwams," along the sidewalks, as they came forth, wiping their mouths, from the free lunch counters, and on the curbstones and "flags" of Carondelet Street, were saying things to make a patriot's heart ache. But contrariwise, in that same Carondelet Street, and hence in all the streets of the big, scattered town, the most prosperous commercial year—they measure from September to September—that had ever risen upon New Orleans had closed its distended record, and no one knew or dreamed that, for nearly a quarter of a century to come, the proud city would never see the equal of that golden year just gone. And so, away yonder among the great lakes on the northern border of the anxious but

hopeful country, Mary was calling, calling, like an unseen bird piping across the fields for its mate, to know if she and the one little nestling might not come to hers.

And at length, after two or three unexpected contingencies had caused delays of one week after another, all in a silent tremor of joy, John wrote the word—"Come!"

He was on his way to put it into the post-office, in Royal Street. At the newspaper offices, in Camp Street, he had to go out into the middle of the way to get around the crowd that surrounded the bulletin-boards, and that scuffled for copies of the latest issue. The day of days was passing; the returns of election were coming in. In front of the *Picayune* office he ran square against a small man who had just pulled himself and the most of his clothing out of the press with the last news crumpled in the hand that he still held above his head.

"Hello, Richling, this is pretty exciting, isn't it!" It was the little clergyman. "Come on, I 'll go your way; let 's get out of this."

He took Richling's arm, and they went on down the street, the rector reading aloud as they walked, and shop-keepers and salesmen at their doors catching what they could of his words as the two passed.

"It 's dreadful! dreadful!" said the little man, thrusting the paper into his pocket in a wad.

"Hi! Mistoo 'Itchlin'," quoth Narcisse, passing them like an arrow, on his way to the paper offices.

"He 's happy," said Richling.

"Well, then, he's the only happy man I know of in New Orleans to-day," said the little rector, jerking his head and drawing a sigh through his teeth.

"No," said Richling, "I'm another. You see this letter." He showed it with the direction turned down. "I'm going now to mail it. When my wife gets it she starts."

The preacher glanced quickly into his face. Richling met his gaze with eyes that danced with suppressed joy. The two friends attracted no attention from those whom they passed or who passed them; the newsboys were scampering here and there, everybody buying from them, and the walls of Common Street ringing with their shouted proffers of the "full account" of the election.

"Richling, don't do it."

"Why not?" Richling showed only amusement.

"For several reasons," replied the other. "In the first place, look at your business!"

"Never so good as to-day."

"True. And it entirely absorbs you. What time would you have at your fireside, or even at your family table? None. It's—well, you know what it is—it's a bakery, you know. You couldn't expect to lodge *your* wife and little girl in a bakery in Benjamin Street; you know you couldn't. Now, *you*—you don't mind it—or, I mean, you can stand it. Those things never need damage a gentleman. But with your wife it would be different. You smile, but—why, you know she couldn't go there. And if you put her anywhere where a lady ought to be, in New Orleans, she would be—well, don't

you see, she would be about as far away as if she were in Milwaukee? Richling, I don't know how it looks to you for me to be so meddlesome, and I believe you think I'm making a very poor argument; but you see this is only one point, and the smallest. Now——"

Richling raised his thin hand and said, pleasantly—

"It's no use. You can't understand; it wouldn't be possible to explain; for you simply don't know Mary!"

"But there are some things I do know. Just think; she's with her mother where she is. Imagine her falling ill here—as you've told me she used to do—and you with that bakery on your hands."

Richling looked grave.

"Oh no," continued the little man. "You've been so brave and patient, you and your wife, both, —do be so a little bit longer! Live close; save your money; go on rising in value in your business; and after a little you'll rise clear out of the sphere you're now in. You'll command your own time; you'll build your own little home; and life and happiness and usefulness will be fairly and broadly open before you." Richling gave heed with a troubled face, and let his companion draw him into the shadow of that "St. Charles" from the foot of whose stairway he had once been dragged away as a vagrant.

"See, Richling. Every few weeks you may read in some paper of how a man on some ferry-boat jumps for the wharf before the boat has touched it, falls into the water, and——. Make sure! Be

brave a little longer—only a little longer! Wait till you're sure."

"I'm sure enough!"

"Oh no, you're not. Wait till this political broil is over. They say Lincoln is elected. If so, the South is not going to submit to it. Nobody can tell what the consequences are to be. Suppose we should have war. I don't think we shall, but suppose we should! There would be a general upheaval, commercial stagnation, industrial collapse, shrinkage everywhere! Wait till it's over. It may not be two weeks hence; it can hardly be more than ninety days at the outside. If it should, the North would be ruined, and you may be sure they are not going to allow *that*. Then, when all starts fair again, bring your wife and baby. I'll tell you what to do, Richling!"

"Will you?" responded the listener, with an amiable laugh that the little man tried to echo.

"Yes. Ask Dr. Sevier! He's right here in the next street. He was on your side last time; may be he'll be so now."

"Done!" said Richling. They went. The rector said he would do an errand in Canal Street, while Richling should go up and see the physician.

Dr. Sevier was in.

"Why, Richling!" He rose to receive him. "How are you?" He cast his eye over his visitor with professional scrutiny. "What brings *you* here?"

"To tell you that I've written for Mary," said Richling, sinking wearily into a chair.

"Have you mailed the letter?"

"I'm taking it to the post-office now."

The Doctor threw one leg energetically over the other, and picked up the same paper-knife that he had handled when, two years and a half before, he had sat thus, talking to Mary and John on the eve of their separation.

"Richling, I'll tell you. I've been thinking about this thing for some time, and I've decided to make you a proposal. I look at you and at Mary and at the times—the condition of the country—the probable future—everything. I know you, physically and mentally, better than anybody else does. I can say the same of Mary. So, of course, I don't make this proposal impulsively, and I don't want it rejected.

"Richling, I'll lend you two thousand to twenty-five hundred dollars, payable at your convenience, if you will just go to your room, pack up, go home, and take from six to twelve months' holiday with your wife and child."

The listener opened his mouth in blank astonishment.

"Why, Doctor, you're jesting! You can't suppose——"

"I don't suppose anything. I simply want you to do it."

"Well, I simply can't!"

"Did you ever regret taking my advice, Richling?"

"No, never. But this—why, it's utterly impossible. Me leave the results of four years' struggle to go holidaying? I can't understand you, Doctor."

"'Twould take weeks to explain."

"It's idle to think of it," said Richling, half to himself.

"Go home and think of it twenty-four hours," said the Doctor.

"It's useless, Doctor."

"Very good, then; send for Mary. Mail your letter."

"You don't mean it!" said Richling.

"Yes, I do. Send for Mary; and tell her I advised it." He turned quickly away to his desk, for Richling's eyes had filled with tears; but turned again and rose as Richling rose. They joined hands.

"Yes, Richling, send for her. It's the right thing to do—if you will not do the other. You know I want you to be happy."

"Doctor, one word. In your opinion is there going to be war?"

"I don't know. But if there is, it's time for husband and wife and child to draw close together. Good day."

And so the letter went.

XLIX.

A BUNDLE OF HOPES.

RICHLING insisted, in the face of much scepticism on the part of the baker's widow, that he felt better, was better, and would go on getting better, now that the weather was cool once more.

"Well, I hope you vill, Mr. Richlin', dtat 's a fect. 'Specially ven yo' vife comin.' Dough *I* could a-tooken care ye choost tso koot as vot she couldt."

"But may be you couldn't take care of her as well as I can," said the happy Richling.

"Oh, tdat 's a tdifferendt. A voman kin tek care herself."

Visiting the French market on one of these glad mornings, as his business often required him to do, he fell in with Narcisse just withdrawing from the celebrated coffee-stand of Rose Nicaud. Richling stopped in the moving crowd and exchanged salutations very willingly; for here was one more chance to hear himself tell the fact of Mary's expected coming.

"So'y, Mistoo 'Itchlin'," said Narcisse, whipping away the pastry crumbs from his lap with a handkerchief and wiping his mouth, "not to encounteh

you a lill biffo', to join in pahtaking the cup what cheeahs at the same time whilce it invigo'ates; to-wit, the coffee cup—as the maxim say. I dunno by what fawmule she makes that coffee, but 'tis astonishin' how 'tis good, in fact. I dunno if you 'll believe me, but I feel almost I could pahtake anotheh cup——? 'Tis the tooth." He gave Richling time to make any handsome offer that might spontaneously suggest itself, but seeing that the response was only an over-gay expression of face, he added, "But I conclude, no. In fact, Mistoo 'Itchlin', thass a thing I have discovud—that too much coffee millytates ag'inst the chi'og'aphy; and thus I abstain. Well, seh, ole Abe is elected."

"Yes," rejoined Richling, "and there 's no telling what the result will be."

"You co'ect, Mistoo 'Itchlin'." Narcisse tried to look troubled.

"I 've got a bit of private news that I don't think you 've heard," said Richling. And the Creole rejoined promptly—

"Well, I *thought* I saw something on yo' thoughts —if you 'll excuse my tautology. Thass a ve'y diffycult to p'event sometime. But, Mistoo 'Itchlin', I trus' 'tis not you 'ave allowed somebody to swin'le you?—confiding them too indiscweetly, in fact?" He took a pretty attitude, his eyes reposing in Richling's.

Richling laughed outright.

"No, nothing of that kind. No, I——"

"Well, I 'm ve'y glad," interrupted Narcisse.

"Oh no, 'tisn't trouble at all. I 've sent for Mrs. Richling. We 're going to resume housekeeping."

Narcisse gave a glad start, took his hat off, passed it to his left hand, extended his right, bowed from the middle with princely grace, and, with joy breaking all over his face, said—

"Mistoo 'Itchlin', in fact—shake!"

They shook.

"Yesseh—an' many 'appy 'eturn! I dunno if you kin billieve that, Mistoo 'Itchlin'; but I was juz about to 'ead that in yo' physio'nomie! Yesseh. But, Mistoo 'Itchlin', when shall the happy o'casion take effect?"

"Pretty soon. Not as soon as I thought, for I got a despatch yesterday saying her mother is very ill, and of course I telegraphed her to stay till her mother is at least convalescent. But I think that will be soon. Her mother has had these attacks before. I have good hopes that before long Mrs. Richling will actually be here."

Richling began to move away down the crowded market-house, but Narcisse said—

"Thass yo' di'ection? 'Tis the same, mine. We may accompany togetheh—if you 'll allow yo' 'umble suvvant?"

"Come along! You do me honour!" Richling laid his hand on Narcisse's shoulder, and they went on at a gait quickened by the happy husband's elation. Narcisse was very proud of the touch, and, as they began to traverse the vegetable market, took the most populous arcade.

"Mistoo 'Itchlin'," he began again, "I muz con-gwatu*late* you! You know I always admiah yo' lady to excess. But appopo of that news, I might infawm you some intelligens consunning myseff."

"Good!" exclaimed Richling. "For it's good news, isn't it?"

"Yesseh,—as you may say,—yes. Faw in fact, Mistoo 'Itchlin', I 'ave ass Dr. Seveah to haugment me."

"Hurrah!" cried Richling. He coughed and laughed, and moved aside to a pillar and coughed until people looked at him, and lifted his eyes, tired but smiling, and, paying his compliments to the paroxysm in one or two ill-wishes, wiped his eyes at last, and said—

"And the Doctor augmented you?"

"Well, no, I can't say that—not p'ecisely."

"Why, what did he do?"

"Well, he 'efuse' me, in fact."

"Why—but that isn't good news, then."

Narcisse gave his head a bright, argumentative twitch—

"Yesseh. 'Tis t'ue he 'efuse'; but ad the same time—I dunno—I thing he wasn' so mad about it as he make out. An' you know thass one thing, Mistoo 'Itchlin', whilce they got life they got hope; and hence I ente'tain the same."

They had reached that flagged area without covering or inclosure, before the third of the three old market-houses, where those dealers in the entire miscellanies of a housewife's equipment, excepting only stoves and furniture, spread their wares and fabrics in the open weather before the Bazaar market rose to give them refuge. He grew suddenly fierce.

"But any'ow I don't care! I had the spunk to ass 'im, an' he din 'ave the spunk to dischawge me!

All he can do, 'tis to shake the fis' of impatience." He was looking into his companion's face, as they walked, with an eye distended with defiance.

"Look out!" exclaimed Richling, reaching a hurried hand to draw him aside. Narcisse swerved just in time to avoid stepping into a pile of crockery, but in so doing went full into the arms of a stately female figure dressed in the crispest French calico and embarrassed with numerous small packages of dry goods. The bundles flew hither and yon. Narcisse tried to catch the largest as he saw it going, but only sent it farther than it would have gone, and as it struck the ground it burst like a pomegranate. But the contents were white; little thin, square-folded fractions of barred jaconet and white flannel; rolls of slender, white lute-string ribbon; very narrow papers of tiny white pearl buttons, minute white worsted socks, spools of white floss, cards of safety-pins, pieces of white Castile soap, etc.

"*Mille pardons, Madame!*" exclaimed Narcisse; "I make you a thousan' poddons, madam!"

He was ill-prepared for the majestic wrath that flashed from the eyes and radiated from the whole dilating, and subsiding, and re-expanding, and rising, and stiffening form of Kate Ristofalo!

"Officerr," she panted,—for instantly there was a crowd, and a man with the silver-crescent badge was switching the assemblage on the legs with his cane to make room,—"Officerr," she gasped, levelling her tremulous finger at Narcisse, "arrist that man!"

"Mrs. Ristofalo!" exclaimed Richling, "don't do that! It was all an accident! Why, don't you see it's Narcisse, my friend?"

"Yer frind rised his hand to sthrike me, sur, he did! Yer frind rised his hand to sthrike me, he did!" And up she went and down she went, shortening and lengthening, swelling and decreasing. "Yes, yes, I know yer frind; indeed I do! I paid two dollars and a half fur his acquaintans nigh upon three yeers agone, sur. Yer frind!" And still she went up and down, enlarging, diminishing, heaving her breath and waving her chin around, and saying in broken utterances, while a hackman on her right held his whip in her auditor's face, crying, "Carriage, sir? carriage, sir?"

"Why didn'—he rin agin—a man, sur? I—I—oh! I wish Mr. Ristofalah war heer!—to teach um how—to walk!—Yer frind, sur,—ixposing me!" She pointed to Narcisse and the policeman gathering up the scattered lot of tiny things. Her eyes filled with tears, but still shot lightning. "If he's hurrted me, he's got 'o suffer fur ud, Mr. Richlin'!" And she expanded again.

"Carriage, sir, carriage?" continued the man with the whip.

"Yes!" said Richling and Mrs. Ristofalo in a breath. She took his arm, the hackman seized the bundles from the policeman, threw open his hack door, laid the bundles on the front seat, and let down the folding steps. The crowd dwindled away to a few urchins.

"Officer," said Mrs. Ristofalo, her foot on the step and composure once more in her voice, "ye needn' arrest um. I could of done ud, sur," she added to Narcisse himself, "but I'm too much of a laydy, sur!" And she sank together and stretched herself

up once more, entered the vehicle, and sat with a perpendicular back, her arms folded on her still heaving bosom, and her head high.

As to her ability to have that arrest made, Kate Ristofalo was in error. Narcisse smiled to himself; for he was conscious of one advantage that overtopped all the sacredness of female helplessness, public right, or any other thing whatsoever. It lay in the simple fact that he was acquainted with the policeman. He bowed blandly to the officer, stepped backward, touching his hat, and walked away, the policeman imitating each movement with the promptness and faithfulness of a mirror.

"Aren't ye goin' to get in, Mr. Richlin'?" asked Mrs. Ristofalo. She smiled first and then looked alarmed.

"I—I can't very well—if you 'll excuse me, ma'am."

"Ah, Mr. Richlin'!"—she pouted girlishly. "Gettin' proud!" She gave her head a series of movements, as to say she might be angry if she would, but she wouldn't. "Ye won't know uz when Mrs. Richlin' comes."

Richling laughed, but she gave a smiling toss to indicate that it was a serious matter.

"Come," she insisted, patting the seat beside her with honeyed persuasiveness, "come and tell me all about ud. Mr. Ristofalah nivver goes into petick-lers, an' so I har'ly know anny more than jist she 's a-comin'. Come, get in an' tell me about Mrs. Richlin' —that is, if ye like the subject—and I don't believe ye do." She lifted her finger, shook it roguishly close to her own face, and looked at him sidewise.

"Ah, nivver mind, sur! that's rright! Furgit yer old frinds—may be ye wudden't do ud if ye knewn everythin'. But that's rright; that's the way with min." She suddenly changed to subdued earnestness, turned the catch of the door, and, as the door swung open, said: "Come, if ud's only fur a bit o' the way—if ud's only fur a ming-ute. I've got something to tell ye."

"I must get out at Washington Market," said Richling, as he got in. The hack hurried down Old Levee Street.

"And now," said she, merriment dancing in her eyes, her folded arms tightening upon her bosom, and her lips struggling against their own smile, "I'm just a good mind not to tell ye at ahll!"

Her humour was contagious, and Richling was ready to catch it. His own eye twinkled.

"Well, Mrs. Ristofalo, of course, if you feel any embarrassment——"

"Ye villain!" she cried, with delighted indignation, "I didn' mean nawthing about *that*, an' ye knew ud! Here, git out o' this carridge!" But she made no effort to eject him.

"Mary and I are interested in all your hopes," said Richling, smiling softly upon the damaged bundle which he was making into a tight package again on his knee. "You'll tell me your good news if it's only that I may tell her, will you not?"

"*I* will. And it's joost this, Mr. Richlin': that if there be's a war, Mr. Ristofalah's to be lit out o' prison."

"I'm very glad!" cried Richling, but stopped

short, for Mrs. Ristofalo's growing dignity indicated that there was more to be told.

"I 'm sure ye air, Mr. Richlin'; and I 'm sure ye 'll be glad—a heap gladder nor I am—that in that case he 's to be Captain Ristofalah."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sur." The wife laid her palm against her floating ribs and breathed a sigh. "I don't like ud, hir. Richlin'. No, sur. I don't like tytles." She got her fan from under her handkerchief and set it agoing. "I nivver liked the idee of bein' a tytled man's wife. No, sur." She shook her head, elevating it as she shook it. "It creates too much invy, Mr. Richlin'. Well, good-bye." The carriage was stopping at the Washington Market. "Now, don't ye mintion it to a livin' soul, Mr. Richlin'!"

Richling said, "No."

"No, sur; fur there be's manny a slip 'tuxt the cup an' the lip, ye know; an' there may be no war after all, and we may all be disapp'inted. But he 's bound to be tleared if he 's tried, and don't ye see —I—I don't want um to be a captain, annyhow, don't ye see?"

Richling saw, and they parted.

Thus everybody hoped. Dr. Sevier, wifeless, childless, had his hopes too, nevertheless. Hopes for the hospital and his many patients in it and out of it; hopes for his town and his State; hopes for Richling and Mary; and hopes with fears, and fears with hopes, for the great sisterhood of States. Richling had one hope more. After some weeks had passed Dr. Sevier ventured once more to say—

"Richling, go home. Go to your wife. I must tell you you're no ordinary sick man. Your life is in danger."

"Will I be out of danger if I go home?" asked Richling.

Dr. Sevier made no answer.

"Do you still think we may have war?" asked Richling again.

"I know we shall."

"And will the soldiers come back," asked the young man, smilingly, "when they find their lives in danger?"

"Now, Richling, that's another thing entirely; that's the battle-field."

"Isn't it all the *same* thing, Doctor? Isn't it all a battle-field?"

The Doctor turned impatiently, disdaining to reply. But in a moment he retorted—

"We take wounded men off the field!"

"They don't take themselves off," said Richling, smiling.

"Well," rejoined the Doctor, rising and striding toward a window, "a good general may order a retreat."

"Yes, but—may be I oughtn't to say what I was thinking——"

"Oh, say it!"

"Well, then, he don't let his surgeon order it. Doctor," continued Richling, smiling apologetically as his friend confronted him, "you know, as you say, better than any one else, all that Mary and I have gone through—nearly all—and how we've gone through it. Now, if my life should end here

shortly, what would the whole thing mean? It would mean nothing, Doctor; it would be meaningless. No, sir; this isn't the end. Mary and I"—his voice trembled an instant and then was firm again—"are designed for a long life. I argue from the simple fitness of things—this is not the end."

Dr. Sevier turned his face quickly toward the window, and so remained.

L.

FALL IN.

THERE came a sound of drums. Twice on such a day, once the day before, thrice the next day, till by-and-by it was the common thing. High-stepping childhood with laths and broom-handles at shoulder was not fated, as in the insipid days of peace, to find, on running to the corner, its high hopes mocked by a wagon of empty barrels rumbling over the cobble-stones. No; it was the Washington Artillery, or the Crescent Rifles, or the Orleans Battalion, or, best of all, the blue-jacketed, white-legginged, red-breeched, and red-fezzed Zouaves; or, better than the best, it was all of them together, their captains stepping backward, sword in both hands, calling "*Gauche! gauche!*" ("Left! left!") "Guide right!"—"*Portez armes!*" and facing around again, throwing their shining blades stiffly to belt and epaulette, and glancing askance from under their abundant plumes to the crowded balconies above. Yea, and the drum-majors before, and the brilliant-petticoated vivandières behind!

What pomp! what giddy rounds! Pennons, cock-feathers, clattering steeds, pealing salvoes, ban-

ners, columns, ladies' favours, balls, concerts, toasts, the Free Gift Lottery—don't you recollect?—and this uniform, and that uniform, brother a captain, father a colonel, uncle a major, the little rector a chaplain, Captain Ristofalo of the Tiger Rifles; the Levee covered with munitions of war, steamboats unloading troops, troops, troops, from Opelousas, Attakapas, Texas; and a supper to this company, a flag to that battalion, farewell sermon to the Washington Artillery, tears and a kiss to a spurred and sashed lover, hurried weddings,—no end of them,—a sword to such a one, addresses by such and such, serenades to Miss and to Mademoiselle.

Soon it will have been a quarter of a century ago!

And yet—do you not hear them now, coming down the broad, granite-paved, moonlit street, the light that was made for lovers glancing on bayonet and sword soon to be red with brothers' blood, their brave young hearts already lifted up with the triumph of battles to come, and the trumpets waking the midnight stillness with the gay notes of the Cracovienne?

> "Again, again, the pealing drum,
> The clashing horn, they come, they come,
> And lofty deeds and daring high
> Blend with their notes of victory."

Ah! the laughter; the music; the bravado; the dancing; the songs! "Voilà l'Zouzou!" "Dixie!" "Aux armes, vos citoyens!" "The Bonnie Blue Flag!"—it wasn't bonnie very long. Later the

maidens at home learned to sing a little song—it is among the missing now; a part of it ran—

"Sleeping on grassy couches;
Pillowed on hillocks damp;
Of martial fame how little we know
Till brothers are in the camp."

By-and-by they began to depart. How many they were! How many, many! We had too lightly let them go. And when all were gone, and they of Carondelet Street and its tributaries, massed in that old grey, brittle-shanked regiment the Confederate Guards, were having their daily dress parade in Coliseum Place, and only they and the Foreign Legion remained, when Sister Jane made lint, and flour was high, and the sounds of commerce were quite hushed, and in the custom-house gun-carriages were a-making, and in the foundries big guns were being cast, and the cotton gun-boats and the rams were building, and at the rotting wharves the masts of a few empty ships stood like dead trees in a blasted wilderness, and poor soldiers' wives crowded around the "Free Market," and grass began to spring up in the streets,—they were many still, while far away; but some marched no more, and others marched on bleeding feet, in rags; and it was very, very hard for some of us to hold the voice steady and sing on through the chorus of the little song—

"Brave boys are they!
Gone at their country's call.
And yet—and yet—we cannot forget
That many brave boys must fall."

O Shiloh, Shiloh!

But before the gloom had settled down upon us it was a gay dream.

"Mistoo 'Itchlin', in fact, 'ow you ligue my uniefawm? You thing it suit my style? They got about two poun' of gole lace on that uniefawm. Yesseh. Me, the h-only thing,—I don' ligue those epaulette'. So soon ev'ybody see that on me, 'tis 'Lieut'nan!' in thiz place, an' 'Lieut'nan!' in that place. My de'seh, you 'd thing I 'm a majo'-gen'l, in fact. Well, of co'se, I don' ligue that."

"And so you 're a lieutenant?"

"Third! Of the Chasseurs-à-Pied! Coon he'p it, in fact; the fellehs elected me. Goin' at Pensacola to-maw. Dr. Seveah *con*tinue my sala'y whilce I 'm gone, no matteh the len'th. Me, I don' care, so long the sala'y *con*tinue, if that waugh las' ten yeah! You ah pe'haps goin' ad the ball to-nighd, Mistoo 'Itchlin'? I dunno 'ow 'tis—I suppose you 'll be aztonizh' w'en I infawm you—that ball wemine me of that battle of Wattaloo! Did you evva yeh those line' of Lawd By'on—

> "'Theh was a soun' of wibalwy by night,
> W'en—'Ush- 'ark!—A deep soun' stwike!'—?

Thaz by Lawd By'on. Yesseh. Well"——

The Creole lifted his right hand energetically, laid its inner edge against the brass button of his *képi*, and then waved it gracefully abroad—

"*Au 'evoi'*, Mistoo 'Itchlin'. I leave you to defen' the city."

"To-morrow," in those days of unreadiness and disconnection, glided just beyond reach continually.

When at times its realisation was at length grasped, it was away over on the far side of a fortnight or further. However, the to-morrow for Narcisse came at last.

A quiet order for attention runs down the column. Attention it is. Another order follows, higher-keyed, longer drawn out, and with one sharp "clack!" the sword-bayoneted rifles go to the shoulders of as fine a battalion as any in the land of Dixie.

"*En avant!*"—Narcisse's heart stands still for joy—"March!"

The bugle rings, the drums beat; "tramp, tramp," in quick succession, go the short-stepping, nimble Creole feet, and the old walls of the Rue Chartres ring again with the pealing huzza, as they rang in the days of Villeré and Lafrénière, and in the days of the young Galvez, and in the days of Jackson.

The old Pontchartrain cars move off, packed. Down at the "Old Lake End" the steamer for Mobile receives the burden. The gong clangs in her engine-room, the walking-beam silently stirs, there is a hiss of water underneath, the gang-plank is in, the wet hawser-ends whip through the hawse-holes,—she moves; clang goes the gong again—she glides—or is it the crowded wharf that is gliding?—No.—Snatch the kisses! snatch them! Adieu, adieu! She 's off, huzza—she 's off!

Now she stands away. See the mass of gay colours—red, gold, blue, yellow, with glitter of steel and flutter of flags, a black veil of smoke sweeping over. Wave, mothers and daughters, wives, sisters, sweethearts—wave, wave; you little know the future!

And now she is a little thing, her white wake following her afar across the green waters, the call of the bugle floating softly back. And now she is a speck. And now a little smoky stain against the eastern blue is all,—and now she is gone. Gone. Gone.

Farewell, soldier boys! Light-hearted, little-forecasting, brave, merry boys! God accept you, our offering of first-fruits! See that mother—that wife—take them away; it is too much. Comfort them, father, brother; tell them their tears may be for nought.

> "And yet—and yet—we cannot forget
> That many brave boys must fall."

Never so glad a day had risen upon the head of Narcisse. For the first time in his life he moved beyond the corporate limits of his native town.

"'Ezcape fum the aunt, thou sluggud!'" "*Au 'evoi'*" to his aunt and the uncle of his aunt. "*Au 'evoi'! Au 'evoi'!*"—desk, pen, book—work, care, thought, restraint—all sinking, sinking beneath the receding horizon of Lake Pontchartrain, and the wide world and a soldier's life before him.

Farewell, Byronic youth! You are not of so frail a stuff as you have seemed. You shall thirst by day and hunger by night. You shall keep vigil on the sands of the Gulf and on the banks of the Potomac. You shall grow brown, but prettier. You shall shiver in loathsome tatters, yet keep your grace, your courtesy, your joyousness. You shall ditch and lie down in ditches, and shall sing your saucy songs of defiance in the face of the foe, so

blackened with powder and dust and smoke that your mother in heaven would not know her child. And you shall borrow to your heart's content chickens, hogs, rails, milk, buttermilk, sweet potatoes, what not; and shall learn the American songs, and by the camp fire of Shenandoah Valley sing "The years creep slowly by, Lorena" to messmates with shaded eyes, and "Her bright smile haunts me still." Ah, boy! there's an old woman still living in the Rue Casa Calvo—your bright smile haunts her still. And there shall be blood on your sword, and blood —twice—thrice on your brow. Your captain shall die in your arms; and you shall lead charge after charge, and shall step up from rank to rank; and all at once, one day, just in the final onset, with the cheer on your lips, and your red sword waving high, with but one lightning stroke of agony, down, down you shall go in the death of your dearest choice.

LI.

BLUE BONNETS OVER THE BORDER.

ONE morning, about the 1st of June 1861, in the city of New York, two men of the mercantile class came from a cross street into Broadway, near what was then the upper region of its wholesale stores. They paused on the corner, near the edge of the sidewalk.

"Even when the States were seceding," said one of them, "I couldn't make up my mind that they really meant to break up the Union."

He had rosy cheeks, a retreating chin, and amiable, inquiring eyes. The other had a narrower face, alert eyes, thin nostrils, and a generally aggressive look. He did not reply at once, but after a quick glance down the great thoroughfare and another one up it, said, while his eyes still ran here and there—

"Wonderful street, this Broadway."

He straightened up to his fullest height and looked again, now down the way, now up, his eye kindling with the electric contagion of the scene. His senses were all awake. They took in, with a spirit of welcome, all the vast movement: the uproar, the feeling of unbounded multitude, the commercial

splendour, the miles of towering buildings; the long, writhing, grinding mass of coming and going vehicles, the rush of innumerable feet, and the countless forms and faces hurrying, dancing, gliding by, as though all the world's mankind, and womankind, and childhood must pass that way before night.

"How many people, do you suppose, go by this corner in a single hour?" asked the man with the retreating chin. But again he got no answer. He might as well not have yielded the topic of conversation, as he had done; so he resumed it. "No, I didn't believe it," he said. "Why, look at the Southern vote of last November—look at New Orleans. The way it went there, I shouldn't have supposed twenty-five per cent. of the people would be in favour of secession. Would you?"

But his companion, instead of looking at New Orleans, took note of two women who had come to a halt within a yard of them and seemed to be waiting, as he and his companion were, for an opportunity to cross the street. The two newcomers were very different in appearance, the one from the other. The older and larger was much beyond middle life, red, fat, and dressed in black stuff, good as to fabric, but uncommonly bad as to fit. The other was young and pretty, refined, tastefully dressed, and only the more interesting for the look of permanent anxiety that asserted itself with distinctness about the corners of her eyes and mouth. She held by the hand a rosy, chubby little child that seemed about three years old, and might be a girl or might be a boy, so far as could be discerned by masculine eyes. The man did not see this fifth

member of their group until the elder woman caught it under the arms in her large hands, and lifting it above her shoulder, said, looking far up the street—

"O paypy, paypy, choost look de fla-ags! One, two, dtree,—a tuzzent, a hundut, a dtowsant fla-ags!"

Evidently the child did not know her well. The little face remained without a smile, the lips sealed, the shoulders drawn up, and the legs pointing straight to the spot whence they had been lifted. She set it down again.

"We're not going to get by here," said the less talkative man. "They must be expecting some troops to pass here. Don't you see the windows full of women and children?"

"Let's wait and look at them," responded the other, and his companion did not dissent.

"Well, sir," said the more communicative one, after a moment's contemplation, "I never expected to see this!" He indicated by a gesture the stupendous life of Broadway beginning slowly to roll back upon itself like an obstructed river. It was obviously gathering in a general pause to concentrate its attention upon something of leading interest about to appear to view. "We're in earnest at last, and we can see, now, that the South was in the deadest kind of earnest from the word go."

"They can't be any more in earnest than we are now," said the more decided speaker.

"I had great hopes of the peace convention," said the rosier man.

"I never had a bit," responded the other.

"The suspense was awful—waiting to know what

Lincoln would do when he came in," said he of the poor chin. "My wife was in the South, visiting her relatives; and we kept putting off her return, hoping for a quieter state of affairs—hoping and putting off—till first thing you know the lines closed down and she had the hardest kind of a job to get through."

"I never had a doubt as to what Lincoln would do," said the man with sharp eyes; but while he spoke he covertly rubbed his companion's elbow with his own, and by his glance toward the younger of the two women gave him to understand that, though her face was partly turned away, the very pretty ear with no ear-ring in the hole pierced for it was listening. And the readier speaker rejoined in a suppressed voice—

"That's the little lady I travelled in the same car with all the way from Chicago."

"No times for ladies to be travelling alone," muttered the other.

"She hoped to take a steamship for New Orleans, to join her husband there."

"Some rebel fellow, I suppose."

"No, a Union man, she says."

"Oh, of course," said the sharp-eyed one, scepti-cally. "Well, she's missed it. The last steamer's gone, and may get back or may not." He looked at her again, narrowly, from behind his companion's shoulder. She was stooping slightly toward the child, rearranging some tie under its lifted chin and answering its questions in what seemed a chastened voice. He murmured to his fellow, "How do you know she isn't a spy?"

The other one turned upon him a look of pure amusement, but seeing the set lips and earnest eye of his companion, said softly, with a faint, scouting hiss and smile—

"She 's a perfect lady—a perfect one."

"Her friend isn't," said the aggressive man.

"Here they come," observed the other aloud, looking up the street. There was a general turning of attention and concentration of the street's population toward the edge of either sidewalk. A force of police was clearing back into the by-streets a dense tangle of drays, wagons, carriages, and white-topped omnibuses, and far up the way could be seen the fluttering and tossing of handkerchiefs, and in the midst a solid mass of blue with a sheen of bayonets above and every now and then a brazen reflection from in front, where the martial band marched before. It was not playing. The ear caught distantly, instead of its notes, the warlike thunder of the drum corps.

The sharper man nudged his companion mysteriously.

"Listen," he whispered. Neither they nor the other pair had materially changed their relative positions. The older woman was speaking.

"'Twas te fun'est dting! You pe lookin' for te Noo 'Leants shteamer, undt me lookin' for te Hambourg shteamer, undt coompt right so togedter und never vouldn't 'a' knowedt udt yet, ovver te mayn exdt me, 'Misses Reisen, vot iss your name?' undt you headt udt. Undt te minudt you shpeak, udt choost come to me like a flash o' lightenin'—'Udt iss Misses Richlin'!'" The speaker's companion

gave her such attention as one may give in a crowd to words that have been heard two or three times already within the hour.

"Yes, Alice," she said once or twice to the little one, who pulled softly at her skirt asking confidential questions. But the baker's widow went on with her story, enjoying it for its own sake.

"You know, Mr. Richlin' he told me finfty dtimes, 'Misses Reisen, doant kif up te pissness!' Ovver I see te mutcheenery proke undt te foundtries all makin' guns undt kennons, undt I choost says, 'I kot plenteh moneh—I dtink I kfit undt go home.' Ovver I sayss to de Doctor, 'Dte oneh dting—vot Mr. Richlin' ko-in' to too?' Undt Dr. Tseweer he sayss, 'How menneh pa'ls flour you kot shtowed avay?' Undt I sayss, 'Tsoo hundut finfty.' Undt he sayss, 'Misses Reisen, Mr. Richlin' done made you rich; you choost kif um dtat flour; udt be wort' twenny-fife tollahs te pa'l, yet.' Undt sayss I, 'Doctor, you' right, undt I dtank you for te goodt idea; I kif Mr. Richlin' innahow one pa'l!' Undt I done-d it. Ovver I says, 'Doctor, dtat's not like a rigler sellery, yet.' Undt dten he sayss, 'You know, *mine* pookkeeper he gone to te vorr, undt I need——'"

A crash of brazen music burst upon the ear and drowned the voice. The throng of the sidewalk pushed hard upon its edge.

"Let me hold the little girl up," ventured the milder man, and set her gently upon his shoulder, as amidst a confusion of outcries and flutter of hats and handkerchiefs the broad, dense column came on with measured tread, its stars and stripes waving in

the breeze, and its backward-slanting thicket of bayoneted arms glittering in the morning sun. All at once there arose from the great column, in harmony with the pealing music, the hoarse roar of the soldiers' own voices singing in time to the rhythm of their tread. And a thrill runs through the people, and they answer with mad huzzas and frantic wavings and smiles half of wild ardour and half of wild pain; and the keen-eyed man here by Mary lets the tears roll down his cheeks unhindered as he swings his hat and cries "Hurrah! hurrah!" while on tramps the mighty column singing from its thousand thirsty throats the song of John Brown's Body.

Yea, so, soldiers of the Union—though that little mother there weeps but does not wave, as the sharp-eyed man notes well through his tears—yet even so, yea, all the more, go—"go marching on," saviours of the Union; your cause is just. Lo, now, since nigh twenty-five years have passed, we of the South can say it!

"And yet—and yet, we cannot forget"—

and we would not.

LII.

A PASS THROUGH THE LINES.

ABOUT the middle of September following the date of the foregoing incident, there occurred in a farm-house head-quarters on the Indiana shore of the Ohio river the following conversation :—

"You say you wish me to give you a pass through the lines, ma'am. Why do you wish to go through?"

"I want to join my husband in New Orleans."

"Why, ma'am, you'd much better let New Orleans come through the lines. We shall have possession of it, most likely, within a month." The speaker smiled very pleasantly, for very pleasant and sweet was the young face before him, despite its lines of mental distress, and very soft and melodious the voice that proceeded from it.

"Do you think so?" replied the applicant, with an unhopeful smile. "My friends have been keeping me at home for months on that idea, but the fact seems as far off now as ever. I should go straight through without stopping, if I had a pass."

"Ho!" exclaimed the man, softly, with pitying amusement. "Certainly, I understand you would

try to do so. But, my dear madam, you would find yourself very much mistaken. Suppose, now, we should let you through our lines. You 'd be between two fires. You 'd still have to get into the rebel lines. You don't know what you 're undertaking."

She smiled wistfully.

"I 'm undertaking to get to my husband."

"Yes, yes," said the officer, pulling his handkerchief from between two brass buttons of his double-breasted coat and wiping his brow. She did not notice that he made this motion purely as a cover for the searching glance which he suddenly gave her from head to foot. "Yes," he continued, "but you don't know what it is, ma'am. After you get through the *other* lines, what are you going to do *then?* There 's a perfect reign of terror over there. I wouldn't let a lady relative of mine take such risks for thousands of dollars. I don't think your husband ought to thank me for giving you a pass. You say he 's a Union man; why don't he come to you?"

Tears leaped into the applicant's eyes.

"He 's become too sick to travel," she said.

"Lately?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought you said you hadn't heard from him for months." The officer looked at her with narrowed eyes.

"I said I hadn't had a letter from him." The speaker blushed to find her veracity on trial. She bit her lip, and added, with perceptible tremor: "I got one lately from his physician."

"How did you get it?"

"What, sir?"

"Now, madam, you know what I asked you, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yes. Well, I 'd like you to answer."

"I found it three mornings ago, under the front door of the house where I live with my mother and my little girl."

"Who put it there?"

"I do not know."

The officer looked her steadily in the eyes. They were blue. His own dropped.

"You ought to have brought that letter with you, ma'am," he said, looking up again; "don't you see how valuable it would be to you?"

"I did bring it," she replied, with alacrity, rummaged a moment in a skirt pocket, and brought it out. The officer received it, and read the superscription audibly.

"'Mrs. John H——' Are you Mrs. John H——?"

"That is not the envelope it was in," she replied. "It was not directed at all. I put it into that envelope merely to preserve it. That 's the envelope of a different letter—a letter from my mother."

"Are you Mrs. John H——?" asked her questioner again. She had turned partly aside, and was looking across the apartment and out through a window. He spoke once more. "Is this your name?"

"What, sir?"

He smiled cynically.

"Please don't do that again, madam."

She blushed down into the collar of her dress.

"That is my name, sir."

The man put the missive to his nose, snuffed it softly, and looked amused, yet displeased.

"Mrs. H——, did you notice just a faint smell of—garlic—about this——?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I have no less than three or four others with the very same odour." He smiled on. "And so, no doubt, we are both of the same private opinion that the bearer of this letter was—who, Mrs. H——?"

Mrs. H—— frequently by turns raised her eyes honestly to her questioner's and dropped them to where, in her lap, the fingers of one hand fumbled with a lone wedding-ring on the other, while she said—

"Do you think, sir, if you were in my place you would like to give the name of the person you thought had risked his life to bring you word that your husband—your wife—was very ill, and needed your presence? Would you like to do it?"

The officer looked severe.

"Don't you know perfectly well that wasn't his principal errand inside our lines?"

"No."

"No!" echoed the man; "and you don't know perfectly well, I suppose, that he's been shot at along this line times enough to have turned his hair white? Or that he crossed the river for the third time last night, loaded down with musket caps for the rebels?"

"No."

"But you must admit you know a certain person,

wherever he may be, or whatever he may be doing, named Raphael Ristofalo?"

"I do not."

The officer smiled again.

"Yes, I see. That is to say, you don't *admit* it. And you don't deny it."

The reply came more slowly—

"I do not."

"Well, now, Mrs. H——, I've given you a pretty long audience. I'll tell you what I'll do. But do you please tell me, first, you affirm on your word of honour that your name is really Mrs. H——; that you are no spy, and have had no voluntary communication with any, and that you are a true and sincere Union woman."

"I affirm it all."

"Well, then, come in to-morrow at this hour, and if I am going to give you a pass at all I'll give it to you then. Here, here's your letter."

As she received the missive she lifted her eyes, suffused, but full of hope, to his, and said—

"God grant you the heart to do it, sir, and bless you."

The man laughed. Her eyes fell, she blushed, and saying not a word, turned toward the door and had reached the threshold when the officer called, with a certain ringing energy—

"Mrs. Richling!"

She wheeled as if he had struck her, and answered—

"What, sir!" Then turning as red as a rose, she said, "O sir, that was cruel!" covered her face with her hands, and sobbed aloud. It was only as she was in the midst of these last words that she

recognised in the officer before her the sharper-visaged of those two men who had stood by her in Broadway.

"Step back here, Mrs. Richling."

She came.

"Well, madam! I should like to know what we are coming to, when a lady like you—a palpable, undoubted lady—can stoop to such deceptions!"

"Sir," said Mary, looking at him steadfastly, and then shaking her head in solemn asseveration, "all that I have said to you is the truth."

"Then will you explain how it is that you go by one name in one part of the country, and by another in another part?"

"No," she said. It was very hard to speak. The twitching of her mouth would hardly let her form a word. "No—no—I can't—tell you."

"Very well, ma'am. If you don't start back to Milwaukee by the next train, and stay there, I shall——"

"Oh, don't say that, sir! I must go to my husband! Indeed, sir, it's nothing but a foolish mistake made years ago that's never harmed any one but us. I'll take all the blame of it if you 'll only give me a pass!"

The officer motioned her to be silent.

"You 'll have to do as I tell you, ma'am. If not, I shall know it; you will be arrested, and I shall give you a sort of pass that you'd be a long time asking for." He looked at the face mutely confronting him and felt himself relenting. "I dare say this does sound very cruel to you, ma'am; but remember, this is a cruel war. I don't judge you. If

I did, and could harden my heart as I ought to, I'd have you arrested now. But I say, you'd better take my advice. Good morning. *No, ma'am, I can't hear you!* So, now, that's enough! Good morning, madam."

LIII.

TRY AGAIN.

ONE afternoon in the month of February 1862, a locomotive engine and a single weather-beaten passenger coach, moving southward at a very moderate speed through the middle of Kentucky, stopped in response to a handkerchief signal at the southern end of a deep, rocky valley, and, in a patch of grey, snow-flecked woods, took on board Mary Richling, dressed in deep mourning, and her little Alice. The three or four passengers already in the coach saw no sign of human life through the closed panes save the roof of one small cabin that sent up its slender thread of blue smoke at one corner of a little badly cleared field a quarter of a mile away on a huge hill-side. As the scant train crawled off again into a deep, ice-hung defile, it passed the silent figure of a man in butternut homespun, spattered with dry mud, standing close beside the track on a heap of cross-tie cinders and fire-bent railroad iron, a grey goat-beard under his chin, and a quilted homespun hat on his head. From beneath the limp brim of this covering, as the train moved by him, a tender, silly smile beamed upward toward one

hastily raised window whence the smile of Mary and the grave, unemotional gaze of the child met it for a moment before the train swung round a curve in the narrow way, and quickened speed on down grade.

The conductor came and collected her fare. He smelt of tobacco above the smell of the coach in general.

"Do you charge anything for the little girl?"

The purse in which the inquirer's finger and thumb tarried was limber and flat.

"No, ma'am."

It was not the customary official negative; a tawdry benevolence of face went with it, as if to say he did not charge because he would not; and when Mary returned a faint beam of appreciation, he went out upon the rear platform and wiped the plenteous dust from his shoulders and cap. Then he returned to his seat at the stove and renewed his conversation with a lieutenant in hard-used blue, who said "the rebel lines ought never to have been allowed to fall back to Nashville," and who knew "how Grant could have taken Fort Donelson a week ago if he had had any sense."

There were but few persons, as we have said, in the car. A rough man in one corner had a little captive, a tiny, dappled fawn, tied by a short rough bit of rope to the foot of the car seat. When the conductor by-and-by lifted the little Alice up from the cushion, where she sat with her bootees straight in front of her at its edge, and carried her, speechless and drawn together like a kitten, and stood her beside the captive orphan, she simply

turned about and pattered back to her mother's side.

"I don't believe she even saw it," said the conductor, standing again by Mary.

"Yes, she did," replied Mary, smiling upon the child's head as she smoothed its golden curls; "she 'll talk about it to-morrow."

The conductor lingered a moment, wanting to put his own hand there, but did not venture, perhaps because of the person sitting on the next seat behind, who looked at him rather steadily until he began to move away.

This was a man of slender, commanding figure and advanced years. Beside him, next the window, sat a decidedly aristocratic woman, evidently his wife. She, too, was of fine stature, and so, without leaning forward from the back of her seat, or unfolding her arms, she could make kind eyes to Alice, as the child with growing frequency stole glances, at first over her own little shoulder, and later over her mother's, facing backward and kneeling on the cushion. At length a "cooky" passed between them in dead silence, and the child turned and gazed mutely in her mother's face with the cooky just in sight.

"It can't hurt her," said the lady, in a sweet voice, to Mary, leaning forward with her hands in her lap. By the time the sun began to set in a cool, golden haze across some wide stretches of rolling fallow, a conversation had sprung up, and the child was in the lady's lap, her little hand against the silken bosom, playing with a costly watch.

The talk began about the care of Alice, passed to the diet, and then to the government of children, all in a light way, a similarity of convictions pleasing the two ladies more and more as they found it run further and further. Both talked, but the strange lady sustained the conversation, although it was plainly both a pastime and a comfort to Mary. Whenever it threatened to flag, the handsome stranger persisted in reviving it. Her husband only listened and smiled, and with one finger made every now and then a soft, slow pass at Alice, who each time shrank as slowly and softly back into his wife's fine arm. Presently, however, Mary raised her eyebrows a little and smiled, to see her sitting quietly in the gentleman's lap; and as she turned away and rested her elbow on the window-sill and her cheek on her hand in a manner that betrayed weariness, and looked out upon the ever-turning landscape, he murmured to his wife, "I haven't a doubt in my mind," and nodded significantly at the preoccupied little shape in his arms. His manner with the child was imperceptibly adroit, and very soon her prattle began to be heard. Mary was just turning to offer a gentle check to this rising volubility, when up jumped the little one to a standing posture on the gentleman's knee and, all unsolicited, and with silent clapping of hands, plumped out her full name—

"Alice Sevier Witchlin'!"

The husband threw a quick glance toward his wife; but she avoided it and called Mary's attention to the sunset as seen through the opposite windows. Mary looked, and responded with expressions of

admiration, but was visibly disquieted, and the next moment called her child to her.

"My little girl mustn't talk so loud and fast in the cars," she said, with tender pleasantness, standing her upon the seat and brushing back the stray golden waves from the baby's temples and the brown ones, so like them, from her own. She turned a look of amused apology to the gentleman, and added, "She gets almost boisterous sometimes," then gave her regard once more to her offspring, seating the little one beside her as in the beginning, and answering her musical small questions with composing yeas and nays.

"I suppose," she said, after a pause and a look out through the window,—"I suppose we ought soon to be reaching M—— station, now, should we not?"

"What, in Tennessee? Oh! no," replied the gentleman. "In ordinary times we should; but at this slow rate we cannot nearly do it. We 're on a road, you see, that was destroyed by the retreating army and made over by the Union forces. Besides, there are three trains of troops ahead of us, that must stop and unload between here and there, and keep you waiting, there 's no telling how long."

"Then I 'll get there in the night!" exclaimed Mary.

"Yes, probably after midnight."

"Oh, I shouldn't have *thought* of coming before to-morrow if I had known that!" In the extremity of her dismay she rose half from her seat and looked around with alarm.

"Have you no friends expecting to receive you there?" asked the lady.

"Not a soul! And the conductor says there's no lodging-place nearer than three miles——"

"And that's gone, now," said the gentleman.

"You 'll have to get out at the same station with us," said the lady, her manner kindness itself and at the same time absolute.

"I think you have claims on us, anyhow, that we'd like to pay."

"Oh! impossible," said Mary. "You 're certainly mistaking me."

"I think you have," insisted the lady; "that is, if your name is Richling."

Mary blushed.

"I don't think you know my husband," she said; "he lives a long way from here."

"In New Orleans?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said Mary, boldly. She couldn't fear such good faces.

"His first name is John, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir. Do you really know John, sir?" The lines of pleasure and distress mingled strangely in Mary's face. The gentleman smiled. He tapped little Alice's head with the tips of his fingers.

"I used to hold him on my knee when he was no bigger than this little image of him here."

The tears leaped into Mary's eyes.

"Mr. Thornton," she whispered, huskily, and could say no more.

"You must come home with us," said the lady, touching her on the shoulder. "It 's a wonder of good fortune that we 've met. Mr. Thornton has something to say to you—a matter of business. He 's the family's lawyer, you know."

"I must get to my husband without delay," said Mary.

"Get to your husband?" asked the lawyer, in astonishment.

"Yes, sir."

"Through the lines?"

"Yes, sir."

"I told him so," said the lady.

"I don't know how to credit it," said he. "Why, my child, I don't think you can possibly know what you are attempting. Your friends ought never to have allowed you to conceive such a thing. You must let us dissuade you. It will not be taking too much liberty, will it? Has your husband never told you what good friends we were?"

Mary nodded and tried to speak.

"Often," said Mrs. Thornton to her husband, interpreting the half-articulated reply.

They sat and talked in low tones, under the dismal lamp of the railroad coach, for two or three hours. Mr. Thornton came around and took the seat in front of Mary, and sat with one leg under him facing back toward her. Mrs. Thornton sat beside her, and Alice slumbered on the seat behind vacated by the lawyer and his wife.

"You needn't tell me John's story," said the gentleman; "I know it. What I didn't know before, I got from a man with whom I corresponded in New Orleans."

"Dr. Sevier?"

"No; a man who got it from the Doctor."

So they had Mary tell her own story.

"I thought I should start just as soon as my.

mother's health would permit. John wouldn't have me start before that, and after all I don't see how I could have done it—rightly. But by the time she was well—or partly well—every one was in the greatest anxiety and doubt everywhere. You know how it was."

"Yes," said Mrs. Thornton.

"And everybody thinking everything would soon be settled," continued Mary.

"Yes," said the sympathetic lady, and her husband touched her quietly, meaning for her not to interrupt.

"We didn't think the Union *could* be broken so easily," pursued Mary. "And then all at once it was unsafe and improper to travel alone. Still I went to New York, to take steamer around by sea. But the last steamer had sailed, and I had to go back home; for—the fact is,"—she smiled,—"my money was all gone. It was September before I could raise enough to start again; but one morning I got a letter from New Orleans telling me that John was very ill, and enclosing money for me to travel with."

She went on to tell the story of her efforts to get a pass on the bank of the Ohio river, and how she had gone home once more, knowing she was watched, not daring for a long time to stir abroad, and feeding on the frequent hope that New Orleans was soon to be taken by one or another of the many naval expeditions that from time to time were, or were said to be, sailing.

"And then suddenly—my mother died."

Mrs. Thornton gave a deep sigh.

"And then," said Mary, with a sudden brightening, but in a low voice, "I determined to make one last effort. I sold everything in the world I had, and took Alice and started. I've come very slowly, a little way at a time, feeling along, for I was resolved not to be turned back. I've been weeks getting this far, and the lines keep moving south ahead of me. But I haven't been turned back," she went on to say, with a smile, "and everybody, white and black, everywhere, has been just as kind as kind can be." Tears stopped her again.

"Well, never mind, Mrs. Richling," said Mrs. Thornton; then turned to her husband and asked, "May I tell her?"

"Yes."

"Well, Mrs. Richling,—but do you wish to be called Mrs. Richling?"

"Yes," said Mary, and "Certainly," said Mr. Thornton.

"Well, Mrs. Richling, Mr. Thornton has some money for your husband. Not a great deal, but still—some. The younger of the two sisters died a few weeks ago. She was married, but she was rich in her own right. She left almost everything to her sister, but Mr. Thornton persuaded her to leave some money—well, two thousand dollars—'tisn't much, but it's something, you know—to—ah—to Mr. Richling. Husband has it now at home, and will give it to you—at the breakfast-table to-morrow morning; can't you, dear?"

"Yes."

"Yes, and we'll not try to persuade you to give up your idea of going to New Orleans. I know we

couldn't do it. We 'll watch our chance,—eh, husband?—and put you through the lines; and not only that, but give you letters to—why, dear," said the lady, turning to her partner in good works, "you can give Mrs. Richling a letter to Governor Blank! and another to General Um-hm, can't you; and—yes, and one to Judge Youknow. Oh, they will take you anywhere! But first you 'll stop with us till you get well rested—a week or two, or as much longer as you will."

Mary pressed the speaker's hand.

"I can't stay."

"Oh, you know you needn't have the least fear of seeing any of John's relatives. They don't live in this part of the State at all; and even if they did, husband has no business with them just now, and being a Union man, you know——

"I want to see my husband," said Mary, not waiting to hear what Union sympathies had to do with the matter.

"Yes," said the lady, in a suddenly subdued tone. "Well, we 'll get you through just as quickly as we can." And soon they all began to put on wraps and gather their luggage. Mary went with them to their home, laid her tired head beside her child's in sleep, and late next morning rose to hear that Fort Donelson was taken, and the Southern forces falling back. A day or two later came word that Columbus, on the Mississippi, had been evacuated. It was idle for a woman to try just then to perform the task she had set for herself. The Federal lines?

"Why, my dear child, they 're trying to find the Confederate lines and strike them. You can't lose

anything—you may gain much—by remaining quiet here a while. The Mississippi, I don't doubt, will soon be open from end to end."

A fortnight seemed scarcely more than a day when it was past, and presently two of them had gone. One day comes Mr. Thornton, saying—

"My dear child, I cannot tell you how I have the news, but you may depend upon its correctness. New Orleans is to be attacked by the most powerful naval expedition that ever sailed under the United States flag. If the place is not in our hands by the first of April I will put you through both lines, if I have to go with you myself." When Mary made no answer, he added: "Your delays have all been unavoidable, my child."

"Oh! I don't know;" exclaimed Mary, with sudden distraction; "it seems to me I *must* be to blame, or I 'd have been through long ago. I ought to have *run through* the lines. I ought to have 'run the blockade.'"

"My child," said the lawyer, "you 're mad."

"You 'll see," replied Mary, almost in soliloquy.

LIV.

"WHO GOES THERE?"

THE scene and incident now to be described are without date. As Mary recalled them years afterward, they hung out against the memory a bold, clear picture, cast upon it as the magic lantern casts its tableaux upon the darkened canvas. She had lost the day of the month, the day of the week, all sense of location, and the points of the compass. The most that she knew was that she was somewhere near the meeting of the boundaries of three States. Either she was just within the southern bound of Tennessee, or the extreme north-eastern corner of Mississippi, or else the north-western corner of Alabama. She was aware, too, that she had crossed the Tennessee river, that the sun had risen on her left and had set on her right, and that by-and-by this beautiful day would fade and pass from this unknown land, and the firelight and lamplight draw around them the home-groups under the roof-trees here, where she was a homeless stranger, the same as in the home-lands where she had once loved and been beloved.

She was seated in a small, light buggy drawn

by one good horse. Beside her the reins were held by a rather tall man of middle age, grey, dark, round-shouldered, and dressed in the loose blue flannel so much worn by followers of the Federal camp. Under the stiff brim of his soft-crowned black hat a pair of clear eyes gave a continuous playful twinkle. Between this person and Mary protruded, at the edge of the buggy seat, two small bootees that have already had mention, and from his elbow to hers and back to his, continually swayed drowsily the little golden head to which the bootees bore a certain close relation. The dust of the highway was on the buggy and the blue flannel and the bootees. It showed with special boldness on a black sunbonnet that covered Mary's head, and that somehow lost all its homeliness whenever it rose sufficiently in front to show the face within. But the highway itself was not there; it had been left behind some hours earlier. The buggy was moving at a quiet jog along a "neighbourhood road," with unploughed fields on the right and a darkling woods pasture on the left. By the feathery softness and paleness of the sweet-smelling foliage you might have guessed it was not far from the middle of April, one way or another; and by certain allusions to Pittsburg Landing as a place of conspicuous note, you might have known that Shiloh had been fought. There was that feeling of desolation in the land that remains after armies have passed over, let them tread never so lightly.

"D' you know what them rails is put that way fur?" asked the man. He pointed down with his buggy whip just off the roadside, first on one hand and then on the other.

"No," said Mary, turning the sunbonnet's limp front toward the questioner and then to the disjointed fence on her nearer side; "that's what I've been wondering for days. They've been ordinary worm fences, haven't they?"

"Jess so," responded the man, with his accustomed twinkle. "But I think I see you oncet or twicet lookin' at 'em and sort o' tryin' to make out how come they got into that shape." The long-reiterated W's of the rail-fence had been pulled apart into separate V's, and the two sides of each of these had been drawn narrowly together, so that what had been two parallel lines of fence with the lane between was now a long double row of wedge-shaped piles of rails, all pointing into the woods on the left.

"How did it happen?" asked Mary, with a smile of curiosity.

"Didn't happen at all, 'twas jess *done* by live men, and in a powerful few minutes at that. Sort o' shows what we're approachin' unto, as it were, eh? Not but they's plenty behind us done the same way, all the way back into Kentuck', as you already done see; but this's been done sence the last rain, and it rained night afore last."

"Still I'm not sure what it means," said Mary; "has there been fighting here?"

"Go up head," said the man, with a facetious gesture. "See? The fight came through these here woods here. 'Tain't been much over twenty-four hours, I reckon, since every one o' them-ah sort o' shut-up-fan-shape sort o' fish-traps had a grey-jacket in it layin' flat down an' firin' through the

rails, sort o' random-like, only not much so." His manner of speech seemed a sort of harlequin patchwork from the bad English of many sections, the outcome of a humorous and eclectic fondness for verbal deformities. But his lightness received a sudden check.

"Heigh-h-h," he gravely and softly exclaimed, gathering the reins closer, as the horse swerved and dashed ahead. Two or three buzzards started up from the roadside with their horrid flapping and whiff of quills, and circled low overhead. "Heigh-h-h," he continued, soothingly. "Ho-o-o-o! somebody lost a good nag there—a six-pound shot right through his head and neck. Whoever made that shot killed two birds with one stone, sho!" He was half risen from his seat, looking back. As he turned again and sat down the drooping black sunbonnet quite concealed the face within. He looked at it a moment. "If you think you don't like the risks we can still turn back."

"No," said the voice from out the sunbonnet; "go on."

"If we don't turn back now we can't turn back at all."

"Go on," said Mary; "I can't turn back."

"You're a good soldier," said the man, playfully, again. "You're a better one than me, I reckon; I kin turn back frequently, as it were. I've done it many a time and oft, as the felleh says."

Mary looked up with feminine surprise. He made a pretence of silent laughter that showed a hundred crows' feet in his twinkling eyes.

"Oh, don't you fret, I'm not goin' to run the

wrong way with you in charge. Didn't you hear me promise Mr. Thornton? Well, you see, I've got a sort o' bad memory that kind o' won't let me forgit when I make a promise;—bothers me that way a heap sometimes." He smirked in a self-deprecating way, and pulled his hat-brim down in front. Presently he spoke again, looking straight ahead over the horse's ears—

"Now, that 's the mischief about comin' with me—got to run both blockades at oncet. Now, if you 'd been a good Secesh, and could somehow or 'nother of got a pass through the Union lines, you 'd of been all gay. But bein' Union, the fu'ther you git along the wuss off you air, 'less-n I kin take you and carry you 'way 'long yonder to where you kin jess jump onto a southbound Rebel railroad and light down amongst folks that 'll never think o' you havin' run through the lines."

"But you can't do that," said Mary, not in the form of a request. "You know you agreed with Mr. Thornton that you would simply——"

"Put you down in a safe place," said the man, jocosely; "that 's what it meant, and don't you get nervous——" His face suddenly changed; he raised his whip and held it up for attention and silence, looking at Mary and smiling while he listened. "Do you hear anything?"

"Yes," said Mary, in a hushed tone. There were some old fields on the right hand now, and a wood on the left. Just within the wood a turtle-dove was cooing.

"I don't mean that," said the man, softly.

"No," said Mary, "you mean this, away over

here." She pointed across the fields, almost straight away in front.

"'Tain't so scandalous far 'awa-a-ay' as you talk like!" murmured the man, jestingly; and just then a fresh breath of the evening breeze brought plainer and nearer the soft boom of a bass-drum.

"Are they coming this way?" asked Mary.

"No; they're sort o' dress-paradin' in camp, I reckon." He began to draw rein. "We turn off here, anyway," he said, and drove slowly, but point blank into the forest.

"I don't see any road," said Mary. It was so dark in the wood that even her child, muffled in a shawl and asleep in her arms, was a dim shape.

"Yes," was the reply, "we have to sort o' smell out the way here; but my smellers is good, at times, and pretty soon we'll strike a little sort o' somepnuther like a road, about a quarter from here."

Pretty soon they did so. It started suddenly from the edge of an old field in the forest, and ran gradually down, winding among the trees, into a densely wooded bottom, where even Mary's short form often had to bend low to avoid the boughs of beech-trees and festoons of grape-vine. Under one beech the buggy stood still a moment. The man drew and opened a large clasp-knife, and cut one of the long tough withes. He handed it to Mary, as they started on again.

"With compliments," he said, "and hoping you won't find no use for it."

"What is it for?"

"Why, you see, later on we'll be in the saddle; and if such a thing should jess accidentally happen to

happen, which I hope it won't, to be sho', that I should happen to sort o' absent-mindedly yell out 'go,' like as if a hornet had stabbed me, you jess come down with that switch, and make the critter under you run like a scared dog, as it were."

"Must I?"

"No, I don't say you *must*, but you 'd better, I bet you. You needn't if you don't want to."

Presently the dim path led them into a clear, rippling creek, and seemed to Mary to end; but when the buggy wheels had crunched softly along down stream over some fifty or sixty yards of gravelly shallow, the road showed itself faintly again on the other bank, and the horse, with a plunge or two and a scramble, jerked them safely over the top, and moved forward in the direction of the rising moon. They skirted a small field full of ghostly dead trees, where corn was beginning to make a show, turned its angle, and saw the path under their feet plain to view, smooth and hard.

"See that?" said the man, in a tone of playful triumph, as the animal started off at a brisk trot, lifted his head and neighed. "'My day's work 's done,' sezee; 'I done hoed my row.'." A responsive neigh came out of the darkness ahead. "That 's the trick!" said the man. "Thanks, as the felleh says." He looked to Mary for her appreciation of his humour.

"I suppose that means a good deal; does it?" asked she, with a smile.

"Jess so! It means, first of all, fresh hosses. And then it means a house what ain't been burnt by jayhawkers yit, and a man and woman a-waitin' in

it, and some bacon and cornpone, and may be a little coffee, and milk, anyhow, till you can't rest, and buttermilk to fare-you-well. Now, have you ever learned the trick o' jess sort o' qu'ilin'[1] up, cloze an' all, dry so, and puttin' half a night's rest into an hour's sleep? 'Caze why, in one hour we must be in the saddle. No mo' buggy, and powerful few roads. Comes as nigh coonin' it as I reckon you ever 'lowed you'd like to do, don't it?"

He smiled, pretending to hold back much laughter, and Mary smiled too. At mention of a woman she had removed her bonnet, and was smoothing her hair with her hand.

"I don't care," she said, "if only you 'll bring us through."

The man made a ludicrous gesture of self-abasement.

"Not knowin', can't say, as the felleh says; but what I can tell you—I always start out to make a spoon or spoil a horn, and which one I 'll do I seldom ever promise till it 's done. But I have a sneakin' notion, as it were, that I 'm the clean sand and no discount, as Mr. Lincoln says, and I do my best. Angels can do no more, as the felleh says."

He drew rein. "Whoa." Mary saw a small log cabin, and a fire-light shining under the bottom of the door.

"The woods seem to be on fire just over there in three or four places, are they not?" she asked, as she passed the sleeping Alice down to the man, who had got out of the buggy.

[1] Coiling.

"Them 's the camps," said another man, who had come out of the house, and was letting the horse out of the shafts.

"If we was on the rise o' the hill yonder we could see the Confedick camps, couldn't we, Isaiah?" asked Mary's guide.

"Easy," said that prophet. "I heer 'em to-day two, three times, plain, cheerin' at somethin'."

About the middle of that night Mary Richling was sitting very still and upright on a large dark horse that stood champing his Mexican bit in the black shadow of a great oak. Alice rested before her, fast asleep against her bosom. Mary held by the bridle another horse, whose naked saddle-tree was empty. A few steps in front of her the light of the full moon shone almost straight down upon a narrow road that just there emerged from the shadow of woods on either side, and divided into a main right fork and a much smaller one that curved around to Mary's left. Off in the direction of the main fork the sky was all aglow with camp-fires. Only just here on the left there was a cool and grateful darkness.

She lifted her head alertly. A twig crackled under a tread, and the next moment a man came out of the bushes at the left, and without a word took the bridle of the led horse from her fingers and vaulted into the saddle. The hand that rested a moment on the cantle as he rose grasped a "navy six." He was dressed in dull homespun, but he was the same who had been dressed in blue. He turned his horse and led the way down the lesser road.

"If we 'd of gone three hundred yards further," he whispered, falling back and smiling broadly, "we 'd 'a' run into the pickets. I went nigh enough to see the videttes settin' on their hosses in the main road. This here ain't no road; it just goes up to a nigger quarters. I 've got one o' the niggers to show us the way."

"Where is he?" whispered Mary; but before her companion could answer, a tattered form moved from behind a bush a little in advance, and started ahead in the path, walking and beckoning. Presently they turned into a clear, open forest, and followed the long, rapid, swinging stride of the negro for nearly an hour. Then they halted on the bank of a deep, narrow stream. The negro made a motion for them to keep well to the right when they should enter the water. The white man softly lifted Alice to his arms, directed and assisted Mary to kneel in her saddle with her skirts gathered carefully under her, and so they went down into the cold stream, the negro first, with arms outstretched above the flood; then Mary, and then the white man,—or, let us say plainly, the spy,—with the unawakened child on his breast. And so they rose out of it on the farther side without a shoe or garment wet save the rags of their dark guide.

Again they followed him along a line of stake-and-rider fence, with the woods on one side and the bright moonlight flooding a field of young cotton on the other. Now they heard the distant baying of house-dogs, now the doleful call of the chuck-will's-widow, and once Mary's blood turned, for an instant, to ice at the unearthly shriek of the hoot-owl just

above her head. At length they found themselves in a dim, narrow road, and the negro stopped.

"Dess keep dish yeh road fo' 'bout half mile an' you strak 'pon de broad, main road. Tek de right, an' you go whah yo' fancy tek you."

"Good-bye," whispered Mary.

"Good-bye, Miss," said the negro, in the same low voice; "good-bye, boss; don't you fo'git you promise tek me thoo to de 'Yankee' when you come back. I 'feered you gwine fo'git it, boss."

The spy said he would not, and they left him. The half mile was soon passed, though it turned out to be a mile and a half, and at length Mary's companion looked back as they rode single file, with Mary in the rear, and said softly—

"There 's the road," pointing at its broad, pale line with his six-shooter.

As they entered it and turned to the right, Mary, with Alice again in her arms, moved somewhat ahead of her companion, her indifferent horsemanship having compelled him to drop back to avoid a prickly bush. His horse was just quickening his pace to regain the lost position, when a man sprang up from the ground on the farther side of the highway, snatched a carbine from the earth, and cried, "Halt!"

The dark recumbent forms of six or eight others could be seen, enveloped in their blankets, lying about a few red coals. Mary turned a frightened look backward and met the eyes of her companion.

"Move a little faster," said he, in a low, clear voice. As she promptly did so she heard him answer the challenge, as his horse trotted softly after hers.

"Don't stop us, my friend; we're taking a sick child to the doctor."

"Halt, you hound!" the cry rang out; and as Mary glanced back three or four men were just leaping into the road. But she saw, also, her companion, his face suffused with an earnestness that was almost an agony, rise in his stirrups with the stoop of his shoulders all gone, and wildly cry—

"Go!"

She smote the horse and flew. Alice woke and screamed.

"Hush, my darling," said the mother, laying on the withe; "mamma's here. Hush, darling, mamma's here. Don't be frightened, darling baby. O God, spare my child!" and away she sped.

The report of a carbine rang out and went rolling away in a thousand echoes through the wood. Two others followed in sharp succession, and there went close by Mary's ear the waspish whine of a minie-ball. At the same moment she recognised, once,—twice,—thrice,—just at her back where the hoofs of her companion's horse were clattering,—the tart rejoinders of his navy six.

"Go!" he cried again. "Lay low! lay low! cover the child!" But his words were needless. With head bowed forward and form crouched over the crying, clinging child, with slackened rein and fluttering dress, and sunbonnet, and loosened hair blown back upon her shoulders, with lips compressed and silent prayers, Mary was riding for life and liberty and her husband's bedside.

"O mamma, mamma," wailed the terrified little one.

"Go on! Go on!" cried the voice behind; "they're—saddling—up! Go! go! We're goin' to make it! We're going to *make* it! Go-o-o!"

Half an hour later they were again riding abreast at a moderate gallop. Alice's cries had been quieted, but she still clung to her mother in a great tremor. Mary and her companion conversed earnestly in the subdued tone that had become their habit.

"No, I don't think they followed us fur," said the spy. "Seem like they's jess some scouts, most likely a-comin' in to report, feelin' pooty safe, and sort o' takin' it easy and careless; 'dreamin' the happy hours away,' as the felleh says. I reckon they sort o' believed my story, too; the little gal yelled so sort o' skilful. We kin slack up some more now; we want to get our critters lookin' cool and quiet ag'in as quick as we kin, befo' we meet up with somebody." They reined into a gentle trot. He drew his revolver, whose emptied chambers he had already refilled. "D'd you hear this little felleh sing, 'Listen to the mockin'-bird'?"

"Yes," said Mary; "but I hope it didn't hit any of them."

He made no reply.

"Don't you?" she asked.

He grinned.

"D'you want a felleh to wish he was a bad shot?"

"Yes," said Mary, smiling.

"Well, seein' as you're along, I do. For they wouldn't give us up so easy if I'd a hit one. Oh,

mine was only sort o' complimentary shots,—much as to say, 'Same to you, gents,' as the felleh says."

Mary gave him a pleasant glance by way of courtesy, but was busy calming the child. The man let his weapon into its holster under his home-spun coat and lapsed into silence. He looked long and steadily at the small feminine figure of his companion. His eyes passed slowly from the knee thrown over the saddle's horn to the gentle forehead slightly bowed as her face sank to meet the uplifted kisses of the trembling child, then over the crown and down the heavy, loosened tresses that hid the sunbonnet hanging back from her throat by its strings, and flowed on down to the saddle-bow. His admiring eyes, grave for once, had made the journey twice before he noticed that the child was trying to comfort the mother, and that the light of the sinking moon was glistening back from Mary's falling tears.

"Better let me have the little one," he said, "and you sort o' fix up a little, befo' we happen to meet up with somebody, as I say. It's lucky we haven't done it already."

A little coaxing prevailed with Alice, and the transfer was made. Mary turned away her wet eyes, smiling for shame of them, and began to coil her hair, her companion's eye following.

"Oh, you ain't got no business to be ashamed of a few tears; I knowed you was a good soldier, befo' ever we started; I see it in yo' eye. Not as I want to be complimentin' of you jess now. 'I come not here to talk,' as they used to say in school. D' you over hear that piece?"

"Yes," said Mary.

"That 's taken from Romans, ain't it?"

"No," said Mary again, with a broad smile.

"I didn't know," said the man; "I ain't no brag Bible scholar." He put on a look of droll modesty. "I used to could say the ten commandments of the decalogue, oncet, and I still tries to keep 'em, in' ginerally. There 's another burnt house. That 's the third one we done passed inside a mile. Raiders was along here about two weeks back. Hear that rooster crowin'? When we pass the plantation whar he is, and rise the next hill, we 'll be in sight o' the little town whar we stop for refresh*ments*, as the railroad man says. You must begin to feel jess about everlastin'ly wore out, don't you?"

"No," said Mary; but he made a movement of the head to indicate that he had his belief to the contrary.

At an abrupt angle of the road Mary's heart leaped into her throat to find herself and her companion suddenly face to face with two horsemen in grey, journeying leisurely toward them on particularly good horses. One wore a slouched hat, the other a Federal officer's cap. They were the first Confederates she had ever seen eye to eye.

"Ride on a little piece and stop," murmured the spy. The strangers lifted their hats respectfully as she passed them.

"Gents," said the spy, "good morning." He threw a leg over the pommel of his saddle and the three men halted in a group. One of them copied the spy's attitude. They returned the greeting in kind.

"What command do you belong to?" asked the lone stranger.

"Simmons's battery," said one. "Whoa!"—to his horse.

"Mississippi?" asked Mary's guardian.

"Rackensack," said the man in the blue cap.

"Arkansas," said the other in the same breath. "What is your command?"

"Signal service," replied the spy. "Reckon I look mighty like a citizen jess about now, don't I?" He gave them his little laugh of self-depreciation and looked toward Mary, where she had halted and was letting her horse nip the new grass of the roadside.

"See any troops along the way you come?" asked the man in the hat.

"No; on'y a squad o' fellehs back yonder who was all unsaddled and fast asleep, and jumped up worse scared 'n a drove o' wile hogs. We both sort o' got a little mad, and jess swapped a few shots, you know, kind o' tit for tat, as it were. Enemy's loss unknown!" He stooped more than ever in the shoulders, and laughed. The men were amused. "If you see 'em, I 'd like you to mention me——" He paused to exchange smiles again. "And tell 'em the next time they see a man takin' a lady and sick child to see the doctor, they better hold their fire till they sho he 's on'y a citizen." He let his foot down into the stirrup again, and they all smiled broadly. "Good morning." The two parties went their ways.

"Jess as leave not of met up with them two buttermilk rangers," said the spy, once more at

Mary's side; "but seein' as thah we was, the oniest thing was to put on all the brass I had."

From the top of the next hill the travellers descended into a village lying fast asleep with the morning star blazing over it, the cocks calling to each other from their roosts, and here and there a light twinkling from a kitchen window, or a lazy axe-stroke smiting the logs at a wood-pile. In the middle of the village one lone old man, half-dressed, was lazily opening the little wooden "store" that monopolised its commerce. The travellers responded to his silent bow, rode on through the place, passed over and down another hill, met an aged negro, who passed on the roadside lifting his forlorn hat and bowing low; and, as soon as they could be sure they had gone beyond his sight and hearing, turned abruptly into a dark wood on the left. Twice again they turned to the left, going very warily through the deep shadows of the forest, and so returned half around the village, seeing no one. Then they stopped and dismounted at a stable door, on the outskirts of the place. The spy opened it with a key from his own pocket, went in and came out again with a great armful of hay, which he spread for the horses' feet to muffle their tread, led them into the stable, removed the hay again, and closed and locked the door.

"Make yourself small," he whispered, "and walk fast." They passed by a garden path up to the back porch and door of a small unpainted cottage. He knocked, three soft, measured taps. "Day's breakin'," he whispered again, as he stood with Alice asleep in his arms, while somebody was heard stirring within.

"Sam?" said a low, wary voice just within the unopened door.

"Sister," softly responded the spy, and the door swung inward and revealed a tall woman with an austere but good face, that could just be made out by the dim light of a tallow-candle shining from the next room. The travellers entered and the door was shut. "Well," said the spy, standing and smiling foolishly, and bending playfully in the shoulders;—"well, Mrs. Richlin',"—he gave his hand a limp wave abroad and smirked,—"'In Dixie's land you take yo' stand.' This is it. You 're in it!—Mrs. Richlin', my sister; sister, Mrs. Richlin'."

"Pleased to know ye," said the woman, without the faintest ray of emotion. "Take a seat and sit down." She produced a chair bottomed with rawhide.

"Thank you," was all Mary could think of to reply as she accepted the seat, and "Thank you" again when the woman brought a glass of water. The spy laid Alice on a bed in sight of Mary in another chamber. He came back on tiptoe.

"Now, the next thing is to git you furder south. Wust of it is that, seein' as you got sich a weakness fur tellin' the truth, we 'll jess have to sort o' slide you along fum one Union man to another; sort o' hole fass what I give ye, as you used to say yourself, I reckon. But you 've got one strong holt." His eye went to his sister's, and he started away without a word, and was presently heard making a fire, while the woman went about spreading a small table with cold meats and corn-bread, milk, and butter. Her brother came back once more.

"Yes," he said to Mary, "you've got one mighty good card, and that's it in yonder on the bed. 'Humph!' folks'll say, 'didn't come fur with that there baby, sho!'"

"I wouldn't go far without her," said Mary, brightly.

"*I* say," responded the hostess, with her back turned, and said no more.

"Sister," said the spy, "we'll want the buggy."

"All right," responded the sister.

"I'll go feed the hosses," said he, and went out. In a few minutes he returned. "Joe must give 'em a good rubbin' when he comes, sister," he said.

"All right," replied the woman, and then turning to Mary, "Come."

"What, ma'am?"

"Eat." She touched the back of a chair. "Sam, bring the baby." She stood and waited on the table.

Mary was still eating, when suddenly she rose up, saying—

"Why, where is Mister ——, your brother?"

"He's gone to take a sleep, outside," said his sister. "It's too resky for him to sleep in a house."

She faintly smiled, for the first time, at the end of this long speech.

"But," said Mary, "oh, I haven't uttered a word of thanks. What will he think of me?"

She sank into her chair again with an elbow on the table, and looked up at the tall standing figure on the other side, with a little laugh of mortification.

"You kin thank God," replied the figure. "*He* ain't gone." Another ghost of a smile was seen for a moment on the grave face. "Sam ain't thinkin

about that. You hurry and finish and lay down and sleep, and when you wake up he 'll be back here ready to take you along furder. That's a healthy little one. She wants some more buttermilk. Give it to her. If she don't drink it the pigs 'll get it, as the ole woman says. . . . Now you better lay down on the bed in yonder and go to sleep. Jess sort o' loosen yo' cloze; don't take off noth'n' but dress and shoes. You needn' be afeard to sleep sound; I 'm goin' to keep a lookout."

LV.

DIXIE.

In her sleep Mary dreamed over again the late rencontre. Again she heard the challenging outcry, and again was lashing her horse to his utmost speed; but this time her enemy seemed too fleet for her. He overtook—he laid his hand upon her. A scream was just at her lips, when she awoke with a wild start to find the tall woman standing over her, and bidding her, in a whisper, rise with all stealth and dress with all speed.

"Where 's Alice?" asked Mary. "Where 's my little girl?"

"She 's there. Never mind her yit, till you' dressed. Here; not them cloze; these here home-spun things. Make haste, but don't git excited."

"How long have I slept?" asked Mary, hurriedly obeying.

"You couldn't 'a' more'n got to sleep. Sam oughtn't to have shot back at 'em. They after 'im, hot; four of 'em jess now passed through on the road, right here past my front gate."

"What kept them back so long," asked Mary, tremblingly attempting to button her dress in the back.

"Let me do that," said the woman. "They couldn't come very fast; had to kind o' beat the bushes every hundred yards or so. If they 'd of been more of 'em they 'd 'a' come faster, 'cause they'd 'a' left one or two behind at each turn-out, and come along with the rest. There; now that there hat, there, on the table." As Mary took the hat the speaker stepped to a window and peeped into the early day. A suppressed exclamation escaped her. "O you poor boy!" she murmured. Mary sprang toward her, but the stronger woman hurried her away from the spot.

"Come; take up the little one 'thout wakin' her. Three more of 'em 's a-passin'. The little young feller in the middle reelin' and swayin' in his saddle, and t'others givin' him water from his canteen."

"Wounded?" asked Mary, with a terrified look, bringing the sleeping child.

"Yes, the last wound he 'll ever git, I reckon. Jess take the baby so. Sam 's already took her cloze. He 's waitin' out in the woods here behind the house. He 's got the critters down in the hollow. Now, here. This here bundle 's a ridin'-skirt. It 's not mournin', but you mustn't mind. It 's mighty green and cottony lookin', but—anyhow, you jess put it on when you git into the woods. Now it 's good sun-up outside. The way you must do—you jess keep on the lef' side o' me, close, so as when I jess santer out e-easy todes the back gate you 'll be hid from all the other houses. Then when we git to the back gate I 'll kind o' stand like I was lookin' into the pig pen, and you jess slide away on a line with me into the woods, and there 'll be Sam. No,

no; take your hat off and sort o' hide it. Now; 'you ready?"

Mary threw her arms around the woman's neck and kissed her passionately.

"Oh, don't stop for that," said the woman, smiling with an awkward diffidence. "Come."

"What is the day of the month?" asked Mary of the spy.

They had been riding briskly along a mere cattle-path in the woods for half an hour, and had just struck into an old unused road that promised to lead them presently into and through some fields of cotton. Alice, slumbering heavily, had been, little by little, dressed, and was now in the man's arms. As Mary spoke they slackened pace to a quiet trot, and crossed a broad highway nearly at right angles.

"That would 'a' been our road with the buggy," said the man, "if we could of took things easy." They were riding almost straight away from the sun. His dress had been changed again, and in a suit of new, dark-brown homespun wool, over a pink calico shirt and white cuffs and collar, he presented the best possible picture of spruce gentility that the times would justify. "'What day of the month,' did you ask? *I'll* never tell you, but I know it 's Friday."

"Then it 's the 18th," said Mary.

They met an old negro driving three yoke of oxen attached to a single empty cart.

"Uncle," said the spy, "I don't reckon the boss will mind our sort o' ridin' straight thoo his grove, will he?"

"Not 'tall, boss; on'y dess be so kyine an' shet de gates behine you, sah."

They passed those gates and many another, shutting them faithfully, and journeying on through miles of fragrant lane and fields of young cotton and corn, and stretches of wood where the squirrel scampered before them, and reaches of fallow grounds still wet with dew, and patches of sedge, and old fields grown up with thickets of young trees; now pushing their horses to a rapid gallop, where they were confident of escaping notice, and now ambling leisurely, where the eyes of men afield, or of women at home, followed them with rustic scrutiny; or some straggling Confederate soldier on foot or in the saddle met them in the way.

"How far must we go before we can stop?" asked Mary.

"Jess as far 's the critters 'll take us without showin' distress."

"South is out that way, isn't it?" she asked again, pointing off to the left.

"Look here," said the spy, with a look that was humorous, but not only humorous.

"What?"

"Two or three times last night, and now ag'in, you gimme a sort o' sneakin' notion you don't trust me," said he.

"Oh!" exclaimed she, "I do! Only I 'm so anxious to be going south."

"Jess so," said the man. "Well, we 're goin' sort o' due west right now. You see we dassent take this railroad anywheres about here,"—they were even then crossing the track of the Mobile and

Ohio railway—"because that 's jess where they *sho* to be on the lookout fur us. And I can't take you straight south on the dirt roads, because I don't know the country down that way. But this way, I know it like your hand knows the way to your mouth, as the felleh says. Learned it most all sence the war broke out, too. And so the whole thing is we got to jess keep straight acrost the country here till we strike the Mississippi Central."

"What time will that be?"

"Time! You don't mean time a day, do you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mary, smiling.

"Why, we 'll be lucky to make it in two whole days. Won't we, Alice?" The child had waked, and was staring into her mother's face. Mary caressed her. The spy looked at them silently. The mother looked up, as if to speak, but was silent.

"Hello!" said the man, softly; for a tear shone through her smile. Whereat she laughed.

"I ought to be ashamed to be so unreasonable," she said.

"Well, now, I 'd like to contradict you for once," responds the spy, "but the fact is, how kin I, when Noo Orleens is jest about south-west frum here, anyhow?"

"Yes," said Mary, pleasantly, "it 's between south and south-west."

The spy made a gesture of mock amazement.

"Well, you air particklу what you say. I never hear o' but one party that was more particklу than you. I reckon you never hear' tell o' him, did you?"

"Who was he?" asked Mary.

"Well, I never got his name, nor his habitation, as the felleh says; but he was so conscientious that when a highwayman attackted him oncet, he wouldn't holla murder nor he wouldn't holla thief, 'cause he wasn't certain whether the highwayman wanted to kill him or rob him. He was something like George Washington, who couldn't tell a lie. Did you ever hear that story about George Washington?"

"About his chopping the cherry-tree with his hatchet?" asked Mary.

"Oh, I see you done heard the story," said the spy, and left it untold; but whether he was making game of his auditor or not, she did not know, and never found out. But on they went, by many a home; through miles of growing crops, and now through miles of lofty pine forests, and by log cabins and unpainted cottages, from within whose open doors came often the loud feline growl of the spinning-wheel. So on and on, Mary spending the first night in a lone forest cabin of pine poles, whose master, a Confederate deserter, fed his ague-shaken wife and cotton-headed children oftener with the spoils of his rifle than with the products of the field. The spy and the deserter lay down together, and together rose again with the dawn, in a deep thicket, a few hundred yards away.

The travellers had almost reached the end of this toilsome horseback journey when rains set in, and, for forty-eight hours more, swollen floods and broken bridges held them back, though within hearing of the locomotive's whistle.

But at length, one morning, Mary stepped aboard the train that had not long before started South

from the town of Holly Springs, Mississippi, assisted with decorous alacrity by the conductor, and followed by the station agent with Alice in his arms, and by the telegraph operator with a home-made satchel or two of luggage and luncheon. It was disgusting—to two thin, tough-necked women who climbed aboard unassisted at the other end of the same coach.

"You kin just bet she 's a widder, and them fellers knows it," said one to the other, taking a seat and spitting expertly through the window.

"If she ain't," responded the other, putting a peeled snuff stick into her cheek, "then her husband's got the brass buttons, and they knows that. Look at 'er a-smi-i-ilin' !"

"What you reckon makes her look so wore out ?" asked the first. And the other replied promptly, with unbounded loathing—

"Dayncin'," and sent her emphasis out of the window in liquid form without disturbing her intervening companion.

During the delay caused by the rain Mary had found time to refit her borrowed costume. Her dress was a stout, close-fitting homespun of mixed cotton and wool, woven in a neat plaid of walnut brown, oak red, and the pale olive hue of the hickory. Her hat was a simple round thing of woven pine straw with a slightly drooping brim, its native brown gloss undisturbed, and the low crown wrapped about with a wreath of wild grasses plaited together with a bit of yellow cord. Alice wore a much-washed pink calico frock and a hood of the same stuff.

"Some officer's wife," said two very sweet and ladylike persons of unequal age and equal good taste

in dress, as their eyes took an inventory of her apparel. They wore bonnets that were quite handsome, and had real false flowers and silk ribbons on them.

"Yes, she 's been to camps somewhere to see him."

"Beautiful child she 's got," said one, as Alice began softly to smite her mother's shoulder for private attention, and to whisper gravely as Mary bent down.

Two or three soldiers took their feet off the seats, and one of them, at the amiably murmured request of the conductor, put his shoes on.

"The car in front is your car," said the conductor to one man in especially dirty grey uniform.

"You kin hev it," said the soldier, throwing his palm open with an air of happy extravagance, and a group of grey-headed "citizens," just behind, exploded a loud, country laugh.

"D' I onderstaynd you to lafe at me, saw?" asked the soldier, turning back with a pretence of heavy gloom on his uncombed brow.

"Laughin' at yo' friend yondeh," said one of the citizens, grinning, and waving his hand after the departing conductor.

"'Caze if you lafe at me again, saw,"—the frown deepened,—"I 'll thess go 'ight straight out 'iss caw." [1]

The laugh that followed this dreadful threat was loud and general, the victims laughing loudest of all, and the soldier smiling about benignly, and slowly

[1] Out of this car.

scratching his elbows. Even the two ladies smiled. Alice's face remained impassive. She looked twice into her mother's to see if there was no smile there. But the mother smiled at her, took off her hood and smoothed back the fine gold, then put the hood on again and tied its strings under the upstretched chin.

Presently Alice pulled softly at the hollow of her mother's elbow.

"Mamma — mamma!" she whispered. Mary bowed her ear. The child gazed solemnly across the car at another stranger, then pulled the mother's arm again. "That man over there—winked at me."

And thereupon another man, sitting sidewise on the seat in front, and looking back at Alice, tittered softly, and said to Mary, with a raw drawl—

"She's a-beginnin' young."

"She means some one on the other side," said Mary, quite pleasantly, and the man had sense enough to hush.

The jest and the laugh ran to and fro everywhere. It seemed very strange to Mary to find it so. There were two or three convalescent wounded men in the car, going home on leave, and they appeared never to weary of the threadbare joke of calling their wounds "furloughs." There was one little slip of a fellow—he could hardly have been seventeen—wounded in the hand, whom they kept teased to the point of exasperation by urging him to confess that he had shot himself for a furlough, and of whom they said, later, when he had got off at a flag-station, that he was the bravest soldier in his company. No one on the train seemed to feel that he had got all

that was coming to him until the conductor had exchanged a jest with him. The land laughed. On the right hand and on the left it dimpled and wrinkled in gentle depressions and ridges, and rolled away in fields of young corn and cotton. The train skipped and clattered along at a happy-go-lucky, twelve-miles-an-hour gait, over trestles and stock-pits, through flowery cuts and along slender, rain-washed embankments, where dewberries were ripening, and whence cattle ran down and galloped off across the meadows on this side and that, tails up and heads down, throwing their horns about, making light of the screaming destruction, in their dumb way, as the people made light of the war. At stations where the train stopped—and it stopped on the faintest excuse—a long line of heads and grey shoulders was thrust out of the windows of the soldiers' car in front, with all manner of masculine head-coverings, even bloody handkerchiefs, and woe to the negro or negress or "citizen" who, by any conspicuous demerit or excellence of dress, form, stature, speech, or bearing, drew the fire of that line. No human power of face or tongue could stand the incessant volley of stale quips and mouldy jokes, affirmative, interrogative, and exclamatory, that fell about their victim.

At one spot, in a lovely natural grove, where the air was spiced with the gentle pungency of the young hickory foliage, the train paused a moment to let off a man in fine grey cloth, whose yellow stripes and one golden star on the coat-collar indicated a major of cavalry. It seemed as though pandemonium had opened. Mules braying, negroes yodling, axes

ringing, teamsters singing, men shouting and howling, and all at nothing, mess-fires smoking all about in the same hap-hazard but roomy disorder in which the trees of the grove had grown; the railroad-side lined with a motley crowd of jolly fellows in spurs, and the atmosphere between them and the line of heads in the car windows murky with the interchange of compliments that flew back and forth from the "web-foots"[1] to the "critter company," and from the "critter company" to the "web-foots." As the train moved off —

"I say, boys," drawled a lank, coatless giant on the roadside, with but one suspender and one spur, "tha-at's ri-ight. Gen'l Beerygyard told you to strike fo' yo' homes, an' I see you' a-doin' it ez fass is you kin git thah." And the "citizens" in the rear car windows giggled even at that; while the "web-foots" he-hawed their derision, and the train went on, as one might say, with its hands in its pockets, whooping and whistling over the fields— after the cows; for the day was declining.

Mary was awed. As she had been forewarned to do, she tried not to seem unaccustomed to, or out of harmony with, all this exuberance. But there was something so brave in it, coming from a people who were playing a losing game with their lives and fortunes for their stakes, something so gallant in it, laughing and gibing in the sight of blood and smell of fire and shortness of food and raiment, that she feared she had betrayed a stranger's wonder and admiration every time the train stopped, and the

[1] Infantry.

idlers of the station platform lingered about her window, and silently paid their ungraceful but complimentary tribute of simulated casual glances.

For with all this jest it was very plain there was but little joy. It was not gladness; it was bravery. It was the humour of an invincible spirit—the gaiety of defiance. She could easily see the grim earnestness beneath the jocund temper; and beneath the unrepining smile the privation and the apprehension. What joy there was was a martial joy. The people were confident of victory at last—a victorious end, whatever might lie between. And of even what lay between they would confess no fear. Richmond was safe, Memphis safer, New Orleans safest. Yea, notwithstanding Porter and Farragut were pelting away at Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Indeed, if the rumour be true, if Farragut's ships had passed those forts, leaving Porter behind, then the Yankee sea-serpent was cut in two, and there was an end of him in that direction; ha, ha!

"Is to-day the twenty-sixth?" asked Mary, at last, of one of the ladies in real ribbons, leaning over toward her.

"Yes, ma'am."

It was the younger one who replied. As she did so, she came over and sat by Mary.

"I judge from what I heard your little girl asking you, that you are going beyond Jackson."

"I 'm going to New Orleans."

"Do you live there?" The lady's interest seemed genuine and kind.

"Yes. I am going to join my husband there."

Mary saw by the reflection in the lady's face

that a sudden gladness must have overspread her own.

"He 'll be mighty glad, I 'm sure," said the pleasant stranger, patting Alice's cheek, and looking with a pretty fellow-feeling, first into the child's face, and then into Mary's.

"Yes, he will," said Mary, looking down upon the curling locks at her elbow with a mother's happiness.

"Is he in the army?" asked the lady.

Mary's face fell.

"He 's in ill-health," she replied.

"I know some nice people down in New Orleans," said the lady again.

"We haven't many acquaintances," rejoined Mary, with a timidity that was almost trepidation. Her eyes dropped, and she began softly to smooth Alice's collar and hair.

"I didn't know," said the lady, "but you might know some of them. For instance, there 's Dr. Sevier."

Mary gave a start, and smiled.

"Why, is he your friend too?" she asked. She looked up into the lady's quiet brown eyes and down again into her own lap, where her hands had suddenly knit together, and then again into the lady's face. "We have no friend like Dr. Sevier."

"Mother," called the lady, softly, and beckoned. The senior lady leaned toward her. "Mother, this lady is from New Orleans, and is an intimate friend of Dr. Sevier."

The mother was pleased.

"What might one call your name?" she asked,

taking a seat behind Mary, and continuing to show her pleasure.

"Richling."

The mother and daughter looked at each other. They had never heard the name before.

Yet only a little while later the mother was saying to Mary—they were expecting at any moment to hear the whistle for the terminus of the route, the central Mississippi town of Canton—

"My dear child, no! I couldn't sleep to-night if I thought you was all alone in one o' them old hotels in Canton. No, you must come home with us. We're barely two mile' from town, and we'll have the carriage ready for you bright and early in the morning, and our coachman will put you on the cars just as nice——. Trouble?" She laughed at the idea. "No; I tell you what would trouble me—that is, if we'd allow it; that'd be for you to stop in one o' them hotels all alone, child, and like' as not some careless servant not wake you in time for the cars to-morrow." At this word she saw capitulation in Mary's eyes. "Come, now, my child, we're not going to take No for an answer."

Nor did they.

But what was the result? The next morning, when Mary and Alice stood ready for the carriage, and it was high time they were gone, the carriage was not ready; the horses had got astray in the night. And while the black coachman was on one horse, which he had found and caught, and was scouring the neighbouring fields and lanes and meadows in search of the other, there came out from townward upon the still, country air the long whistle

of the departing train; and then the distant rattle and roar of its far southern journey began, and then its warning notes to the scattering colts and cattle.

"Look away,"—it seemed to sing,—"Look away!" —the notes fading, failing on the ear; "away— —away—away down south in Dixie"—the last train that left for New Orleans until the war was over.

LVI.

FIRE AND SWORD.

THE year the war began dates also, for New Orleans, the advent of two better things: street-cars and the fire-alarm telegraph. The frantic incoherence of the old alarum gave way to the few solemn, numbered strokes that called to duty in the face of hot danger, like the electric voice of a calm commander. The same new system also silenced, once for all, the old nine o'clock gun. For there were not only taps to signify each new fire district,—one for the first, two for the second, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine,—but there was also one lone toll at midday for the hungry mechanic, and nine at the evening hour when the tired workman called his children in from the street, and turned to his couch, and the slave must show cause in a master's handwriting why he or she was not under that master's roof.

And then there was one signal more. Fire is a dreadful thing; and all the alarm signals were for fire except this one. Yet I guess the profoundest wish of every good man and tender woman in New Orleans, when this pleasing novelty of electro-

magnetic warnings was first published for the common edification, was that, midday or midnight, midsummer or midwinter, let come what might of danger or loss or distress, that one particular signal might not sound. Twelve taps. Anything but that.

Dr. Sevier and Richling had that wish together. They had many wishes that were greatly at variance the one's from the other's. The Doctor had struggled for the Union until the very smoke of war began to rise into the sky; but then he "went with the South." He was the only one in New Orleans who knew—whatever some others may have suspected—that Richling's heart was on the other side. Had Richling's bodily strength remained, so that he could have been a possible factor, however small, in the strife, it is hard to say whether they could have been together day by day and night by night, as they came to be when the Doctor took the failing man into his own home, and have lived in amity, as they did. But there is this to be counted; they were both, though from different directions, for peace, and their gentle forbearance toward each other taught them a moderation of sentiment concerning the whole great issue. And, as I say, they both, together, held the one longing hope that whatever war should bring of final gladness or lamentation, the steeples of New Orleans might never toll—Twelve.

But one bright Thursday, April morning, as Richling was sitting, half dressed, by an open window of his room in Dr. Sevier's house, leaning on the arm of his soft chair and looking out at the passers on the street, among whom he had begun to notice

some singular evidences of excitement, there came from a slender Gothic church spire that was highest of all in the city, just beyond a few roofs in front of him, the clear, sudden, brazen peal of its one great bell.

"Fire," thought Richling; and yet, he knew not why, wondered where Dr. Sevier might be. He had not seen him that morning. A high official had sent for him at sunrise and he had not returned.

"Clang," went the bell again, and the softer ding—dang—dong of others, struck at the same instant, came floating in from various distances. And then it clanged again—and again—and again—the loud one near, the soft ones, one by one, after it—six, seven, eight, nine—ah! stop there! stop there! But still the alarm pealed on; ten—alas! alas!—eleven—oh, oh, the women and children!—twelve! And then the fainter, final asseverations of the more distant bells—twelve! twelve! twelve!—and a hundred and seventy thousand souls knew by that sign that the foe had passed the forts. New Orleans had fallen.

Richling dressed himself hurriedly and went out. Everywhere drums were beating to arms. Couriers and aides-de-camp were galloping here and there. Men in uniform were hurrying on foot to this and that rendezvous. Crowds of the idle and poor were streaming out toward the levee. Carriages and cabs rattled frantically from place to place; men ran out-of-doors and leaped into them and leaped out of them and sprang up stair-ways; hundreds of all manner of vehicles fit and unfit to carry passengers and goods crowded toward the railroad depots and

steamboat landings; women ran into the streets wringing their hands and holding their brows; and children stood in the door-ways and gate-ways and trembled and called and cried.

Richling took the new Dauphine Street car. Far down in the third district, where there was a silence like that of a village lane, he approached a little cottage painted with Venetian red, sitting in its garden of oranges, pomegranates, and bananas, and marigolds, and coxcombs behind its white paling fence and green gate.

The gate was open. In it stood a tall, strong woman, good-looking, rosy, and neatly dressed. That she was tall you could prove by the gate, and that she was strong, by the graceful muscularity with which she held two infants—pretty, swarthy little fellows, with joyous black eyes, and evidently of one age and parentage—each in the hollow of a fine, round arm. There was just a hint of emotional disorder in her shining hair and a trace of tears about her eyes. As the visitor drew near, a fresh show of distressed exaltation was visible in the slight play of her form.

"Ah! Mr. Richlin'," she cried, the moment he came within hearing, "'the dispot's heels is on our shores!'" Tears filled her eyes again. Mike, the bruiser, in his sixth year, who had been leaning backward against her knees and covering his legs with her skirts, ran forward and clasped the visitor's lower limbs with the nerve and intention of a wrestler. Kate followed with the cherubs. They were Raphael's.

"Yes, it 's terrible," said Richling.

"Ah! no, Mr. Richlin'," replied Kate, lifting her head proudly as she returned with him toward the gate, "it's outrageouz! but it's not terrible. At least it's not for me, Mr. Richlin'. I'm only Mrs. Captain Ristofalah; and whin I see the collonels' and gin'r'ls' ladies a-prancin' around in their carridges I feel my *humility;* but it's my djuty to be *brave,* sur! An' I'll help to *fight* thim, sur, if the min can't do ud. Mr. Richlin', my husband is th' intimit frind of Gin'r'l Garrybaldy, sur! I'll help to burrin the cittee, sur!—rather nor give ud up to thim vandjals! Come in, Mr. Richlin', come in." She led the way up the narrow shell walk. "Come in, sur; it may be the last time ye do ud before the flames is leppin' from the roof! Ah! I knowed ye'd come. I was a-lookin' for ye. I knowed *ye'd* prove yerself that frind in need that he's the frind indeed! Take a seat an' sit down." She faced about on the vine-covered porch and dropped into a rocking-chair, her eyes still at the point of overflow. "But, ah! Mr. Richlin', where's all thim flatterers that fawned around uz in the days of tytled prosperity?"

Richling said nothing; he had not seen any throngs of that sort.

"Gone, sur! and it's a relief; it's a relief, Mr. Richlin'!" She marshalled the twins on her lap, Carlo commanding the right, Francisco the left.

"You mustn't expect too much of them," said Richling, drawing Mike between his knees, "in such a time of alarm and confusion as this." And Kate responded generously—

"Well, I suppose you're right, sur."

"I've come down," resumed the visitor, letting Mike count off "Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief," on the buttons of his coat, "to give you any help I can in getting ready to leave town. For you mustn't think of staying. It isn't possible to be anything short of dreadful to stay in a city occupied by hostile troops. It's almost certain the Confederates will try to hold the city, and there may be a bombardment. The city may be taken and retaken half a dozen times before the war is over."

"Mr. Richlin'," said Kate, with a majestic lifting of the hand, "I'll niver rin away from the Yanks."

"No, but you must *go* away from them. You mustn't put yourself in such a position that you can't go to your husband if he needs you, Mrs. Ristofalo; don't get separated from him."

"Ah! Mr. Richlin', it's you as has the right to say so! and I'll do as you say. Mr. Richlin', my husband"—her voice trembled—"may be wounded this hour. I'll go, sur, indeed I will; but, sur, if Captain Raphael Ristofalah wor *here*, sur, he'd be ad the *front*, sur, and Kate Ristofalah would be at his gallant side!"

"Well, then, I'm glad he's not here," rejoined Richling, "for I'd have to take care of the children."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Kate. "No, sur! I'd take the lion's whelps wid me, sur! Why, that little Mike theyre can han'le the dthrum-sticks to beat the felley in the big hat!" And she laughed again.

They made arrangements for her and the three

children to go "out into the confederacy" within two or three days at furthest; as soon as she and her feeble helper could hurry a few matters of business to completion at and about the Picayune Tier. Richling did not get back to the Doctor's house until night had fallen and the sky was set aglare by seven miles' length of tortuous harbour front covered with millions' worth of burning merchandise. The city was being evacuated.

Dr. Sevier and he had but few words; Richling was dejected from weariness and his friend weary with dejections.

"Where have you been all day?" asked the Doctor, with a touch of irritation.

"Getting Kate Ristofalo ready to leave the city."

"You shouldn't have left the house—but it's no use to tell you anything. Has she gone?"

"No."

"Well, in the name of common sense, then, when is she going?"

"In two or three days," replied Richling, almost in retort.

The Doctor laughed with impatience.

"If you feel responsible for her going, get her off by to-morrow afternoon at the furthest." He dropped his tired head against the back of his chair.

"Why," said Richling, "I don't suppose the fleet can fight its way through all opposition and get here short of a week."

The Doctor laid his long fingers upon his brow and rolled his head from side to side. Then slowly raising it—

"Well, Richling!" he said, "there must have been some mistake made when you was put upon the earth."

Richling's thin cheek flushed. The Doctor's face confessed the bitterest resentment.

"Why, the fleet is only eighteen miles from here now." He ceased, and then added with sudden kindness of tone: "I want you to do something for me; will you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, go to bed; I'm going. You 'll need every grain of strength you 've got for to-morrow. I'm afraid then it will not be enough. This is an awful business, Richling."

They went upstairs together. As they were parting at its top Richling said—

"You told me a few days ago that if the city should fall, which we didn't expect——"

"That I'd not leave," said the Doctor. "No; I shall stay. I haven't the stamina to take the field, and I can't be a runaway. Anyhow, I couldn't take you along. You couldn't bear the travel, and I wouldn't go and leave you here, Richling,—old fellow."

He laid his hand gently on the sick man's shoulder, —who made no response, so afraid was he that another word would mar the perfection of the last.

When Richling went out the next morning the whole city was in an ecstasy of rage and terror. Thousands had gathered what they could in their hands, and were flying by every avenue of escape. Thousands ran hither and thither, not knowing where or how to fly. He saw the wife and son of

the silver-haired banker rattling and bouncing away toward one of the railway depots in a butcher's cart. A messenger from Kate by good chance met him with word that she would be ready for the afternoon train of the Jackson Railroad, and asking anew his earliest attention to her interests about the lugger landing.

He hastened to the levee. The huge, writhing river, risen up above the town, was full to the levee's top, and, as though the enemy's fleet was that much more than it could bear, was silently running over by a hundred rills into the streets of the stricken city.

As far as the eye could reach, black smoke, white smoke, brown smoke, and red flames rolled and spread, and licked and leaped, from unnumbered piles of cotton bales, and wooden wharves, and ships cut adrift, and steamboats that blazed like shavings, floating down the harbour as they blazed. He stood for a moment to see a little revenue cutter—a pretty topsail schooner—lying at the foot of Canal Street, sink before his eyes into the turbid yellow depths of the river, scuttled. Then he hurried on. Huge mobs ran to and fro in the fire and smoke, howling, breaking, and stealing. Women and children hurried back and forth like swarms of giant ants, with buckets and baskets, and dippers and bags, and bonnets, hats, petticoats, anything—now empty, and now full, of rice and sugar and meal and corn and syrup; and robbed each other, and cursed and fought, and slipped down in pools of molasses, and threw live pigs and coops of chickens into the river, and with one voiceless rush left the broad

levee a smoking, crackling desert, when some shells exploded on a burning gunboat, and presently were back again like a flock of evil birds.

It began to rain, but Richling sought no shelter. The men he was in search of were not to be found. But the victorious ships, with bare black arms stretched wide, boarding nettings up, and the dark muzzles of their guns bristling from their sides, came, silently as a nightmare, slowly around the bend at Slaughterhouse Point, and moved up the middle of the harbour. At the French market he found himself, without forewarning, witness of a sudden skirmish between some Gascon and Sicilian market-men who had waved a welcome to the fleet, and some Texan soldiers who resented the treason. The report of a musket rang out, a second and third re-echoed it, a pistol cracked, and another, and another; there was a rush for cover, another shot, and another, resounded in the market-house, and presently in the street beyond. Then, in a moment, all was silence and emptiness, in which there ventured but a single, stooping, peeping Sicilian, glancing this way and that with his finger on trigger, eager to kill, gliding from cover to cover, and presently gone again from view, leaving no human life visible nearer than the swarming mob that Richling, by mounting a pile of ship's ballast, could see still on the steamboat landing, pillaging in the drenching rain, and the long fleet casting anchor before the town in line of battle.

Late that afternoon, Richling, still wet to the skin, amid pushing and yelling and the piping calls of distracted women and children, and scuffling and

cramming in, got Kate Ristofalo, trunks, baskets, and babes, safely off on the cars. And when, one week from that day, the sound of drums, that had been hushed for a while, fell upon his ear again, no longer the jaunty rataplan of Dixie's drums, but the heavy, monotonous roar of the conqueror's at the head of his dark-blue columns, Richling could not leave his bed.

Dr. Sevier sat by him and bore the sound in silence. As it died away and ceased, Richling said—

"May I write to Mary?"

Then the Doctor had a hard task.

"I wrote for her yesterday," he said. "But, Richling, I—don't think she 'll get the letter."

"Do you think she has already started?" asked the sick man, with glad eagerness.

"Richling, I did the best I knew how——"

"Whatever you did was all right, Doctor."

"I wrote to her months ago, by the hand of Ristofalo. He knows she got the letter. I'm afraid she 's somewhere in the Confederacy trying to get through. I meant it for the best, my dear boy."

"It 's all right, Doctor," said the invalid; but the physician could see the cruel fact slowly grind him.

"Doctor, may I ask one favour?"

"One or a hundred, Richling."

"I want you to let Madame Zenobie come and nurse me."

"Why, Richling, can't I nurse you well enough?" The Doctor was jealous.

"Yes," answered the sick man. "But I'll need a good deal of attention. She wants to do it. She was here yesterday, you know. She wanted to ask you, but was afraid."

His wish was granted.

LVII.

ALMOST IN SIGHT.

In St. Tammany Parish, on the northern border of Lake Pontchartrain, about thirty miles from New Orleans in a straight line across the waters of the lake, stood in time of the war, and may stand yet, an old house of the Creole colonial fashion, all of cypress from sills to shingles, standing on brick pillars ten feet from the ground, a wide veranda in front, and a double flight of front steps running up to it sidewise, and meeting in a balustraded landing at its edge. Scarcely anything short of a steamer's roof or a lighthouse window could have offered a finer standpoint from which to sweep a glass round the southern semicircle of water and sky than did this stair-landing; and here, a long ship's-glass in her hands and the accustomed look of care on her face, faintly frowning against the glare of noonday, stood Mary Richling. She still had on the pine-straw hat, and the skirt, stirring softly in a breeze that had to come around from the north side of the house before it reached her, was the brown and olive homespun.

"No use," said an old, fat, and sun-tanned man

from his willow chair on the veranda behind her. There was a slight palsied oscillation in his head. He leaned forward somewhat on a staff, and as he spoke his entire shapeless and nearly helpless form quaked with the effort. But Mary, for all his advice, raised the glass and swung it slowly from east to west.

The house was near the edge of a slightly rising ground close to the margin of a bayou that glided around toward the left from the woods at its back, and ran, deep and silent, under the shadows of a few huge, widespreading, moss-hung live-oaks that stood along its hither shore, laving their roots in its waters and throwing their vast green images upon its glassy surface. As the dark stream slipped away from these it flashed a little while in the bright open of a marsh, and, just entering the shade of a spectral cypress wood, turned as if to avoid it, swung more than half about, and shone sky-blue, silver, and green as it swept out into the unbroken sunshine of the prairie.

It was over this flowery savannah, broadening out on either hand and spreading far away until its bright green margin joined, with the perfection of a mosaic, the distant blue of the lake, that Mary, dallying a moment with hope, passed her long glass. She spoke with it still raised and her gaze bent through it—

"There 's a big alligator crossing the bayou down in the bend."

"Yes," said the aged man, moving his flat, carpet-slippered feet a laborious inch, "alligator. Alligator not goin' take you 'cross lake. No use lookin'.

'Ow Peter goin' come when win' dead ahead? Can't do it."

Yet Mary lifted the glass a little higher, beyond the green, beyond the crimpling wavelets of the nearer distance that seemed drawn by the magical lens almost into her hand, out to the fine straight line that cut the cool blue below from the boundless blue above. Round swung the glass, slowly, waveringly, in her unpractised hand, from the low cypress forests of Manchac on the west to the skies that glittered over the unseen marshes of the Rigolets on the farthest east.

"You see sail yondeh?" came the slow inquiry from behind.

"No," said Mary, letting the instrument down and resting it on the balustrade.

"Humph! No! Dawn't I tell you is no use look?"

"He was to have got here three days ago," said Mary, shutting the glass and gazing in anxious abstraction across the prairie.

The Spanish Creole grunted.

"When win' change—he goin' start. He dawn't start till win' change. Win' keep ligue dat—he dawn't start 't all." He moved his orange-wood staff an inch, to suit the previous movement of his feet, and Mary came and laid the glass on its brackets in the veranda, near the open door of a hall that ran through the dwelling to another veranda in the rear.

In the middle of the hall a small woman, as dry as the peppers that hung in strings on the wall behind her, sat in a rush-bottomed rocking-chair

plaiting a palmetto hat, and with her elbow swinging a tattered manilla hammock in whose bulging middle lay Alice, taking her compulsory noonday nap. Mary came, expressed her thanks in sprightly whispers, lifted the child out, and carried her to a room. How had Mary got here?

The morning after that on which she had missed the cars at Canton she had taken a south-bound train for Camp Moore, the camp of the forces that had evacuated New Orleans, situated near the railway station of Tangipahoa, some eighty miles north of the captured city. Thence, after a day or two of unavoidable delay and of careful effort to know the wisest step, she had taken stage—a crazy ambulance —with some others, two women, three children, and an old man, and for two days had travelled through a beautiful country of red and yellow clays and sands below and murmuring pines above—vast colonnades of towering, branchless brown columns holding high their green, translucent roof, and opening up their wide, bright, sunshot vistas of gentle, grassy hills that undulated far away under the balsamic forest, and melted at length into luminous green unity and deer-haunted solitudes. Now she went down into richer bottom-lands, where the cotton and corn were growing tall and pretty to look upon, like suddenly grown girls, and the sun was beginning to shine hot. Now she passed over rustic bridges under posted warnings to drive slow or pay a fine, or through sandy fords across purling streams, hearing the monotone of some unseen mill-dam, or scaring the tall grey crane from his fishing or the otter from his pranks. Again she went up into

leagues of clear pine forest with stems as straight as lances; meeting now a farmer and now a school-girl or two, and once a squad of scouts, ill-mounted, worse clad, and yet more sorrily armed; bivouacking with the jolly, tattered fellows, Mary and one of the other women singing for them, and the "boys" singing for Mary, and each applauding each about the pine-knot fire, and the women and children by-and-by lying down to slumber, in soldier fashion, with their feet to the brands, under the pines and the stars, while the grey-coats stood guard in the wavering fire-light; but Mary lying broad awake staring at the great constellation of the Scorpion, and thinking now of him she sought and now remorsefully of that other scout, that poor boy whom the spy had shot far away yonder to the north and eastward. Now she rose and journeyed again. Rare hours were those for Alice. They came at length into a low, barren land of dwarfed and scrawny pines, with here and there a marshy flat; thence through a narrow strip of hickories, oaks, cypresses, and dwarf palmetto, and so into beds of white sand and oyster-shells, and then into one of the villages on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

Her many little adventures by the way, the sayings and doings and seeings of Alice, and all those little adroitnesses by which Mary from time to time succeeded in avoiding or turning aside the suspicions that hovered about her, and the hundred times in which Alice was her strongest and most perfect protection, we cannot pause to tell. But we give a few lines to one matter.

Mary had not yet descended from the ambulance at

her journey's end; she and Alice only were in it; its tired mules were dragging it slowly through the sandy street of the village, and the driver was praising the milk, eggs, chickens, and genteel seclusion of Mrs. ——'s "hotel," at that end of the village toward which he was driving, when a man on horseback met them, and in passing raised his hat to Mary. The act was only the usual courtesy of the highway; yet Mary was startled, disconcerted, and had to ask the unobservant, loquacious driver to repeat what he had said. Two days afterward Mary was walking at the twilight hour in a narrow sandy road that ran from the village out into the country to the eastward. Alice walked beside her, plying her with questions. At a turn of the path, without warning, she confronted this horseman again. He reined up and lifted his hat. An elated look brightened his face.

"It's all fixed," he said. But Mary looked distressed, even alarmed.

"You shouldn't have done this," she replied.

The man waved his hand downward repressively, but with a countenance full of humour.

"Hold on. It's *still* my deal. This is the last time, and then I'm done. Make a spoon or spoil a horn, you know. When you commence to do a thing, do it. Them's the words that's inscribed on my banner, as the felleh says; only I, Sam, ain't got much banner. And if I sort o' use about this low country a little while for my health, as it were, and nibble around sort o' *pro bono pūblico*, takin' notes, why, you ain't a-carin', is you? For wherefore shouldest thou?" He put on a yet more ludicrous

look and spread his hand off at one side, working his outstretched fingers.

"Yes," responded Mary, with severe gravity; "I must care. You did finish at Holly Springs. I was to find the rest of the way as best I could. That was the understanding. Go away." She made a commanding gesture, though she wore a pleading look. He looked grave; but his habitual grimace stole through his gravity and invited her smile. But she remained fixed. He gathered the rein and straightened up in the saddle.

"Yes," she insisted, answering his inquiring attitude; "go. I shall be grateful to you as long as I live. It wasn't because I mistrusted you that I refused your aid at Camp Moore or at——that other place on this side. I don't mistrust you. But don't you see—you must see—it's your duty to see—that this staying and—and—foll—following—is—is—wrong." She stood, holding her skirt in one hand and Alice's hand in the other, not upright, but in a slightly shrinking attitude, and as she added once more, "Go; I implore you—go," her eyes filled.

"I will; I'll go," said the man, with a soft chuckle intended for self-abasement. "I go, thou goest, he goes. 'I 'll skedaddle,' as the felleh says. And yit it do seem to me sorter like,—if my moral sense is worthy of any consideration, which is doubtful, may be,—seems to me like it 's sort o' jumpin' the bounty for you to go and go back on an arrangement that 's been all fixed up nice and tight, and when it 's on'y jess to sort o' 'jump intoe the wagon' that 's to call for you to-morrow sun-up, drove by a nigger boy, and ride a few mile' to a house on the

bayou and wait there till a man comes with a nice little schooner and take you on bode and sail off, and 'good-bye, Sally,' and me never in sight from fust to last, 'and no questions axed.'"

"I don't reject the arrangement," replied Mary, with tearful pleasantness. "If you'll do as I say, I'll do as you say; and that will be final proof to you that I believe you're"—she fell back a step, laughingly—"'the clean sand!'" She thought the man would have perpetrated some small antic; but he did not. He did not even smile, but lifted the rein a little till the horse stepped forward, and, putting out his hand, said—

"Good-bye. You don't need no directions. Jess tell the lady where you' boardin' that you've sort o' consented to spend a day or two with old Adrien Sanchez, and get into the wagon when it comes for you." He let go her hand. "Good-bye, Alice." The child looked up in silence and pressed herself against her mother. "Good-bye," said he once more.

"Good-bye," replied Mary.

His eyes lingered as she dropped her own.

"Come, Alice," she said, resisting the little one's effort to stoop and pick a wild pea blossom, and the mother and child started slowly back the way they had come. The spy turned his horse's head and moved still more slowly in the opposite direction. But before he had gone many rods he turned the animal's head again, rode as slowly back, and beside the spot where Mary had stood got down, and from the small imprint of her shoe in the damp sand took the pea blossom, which, in turning to depart, she

had unawares trodden under foot. He looked at the small crushed thing for a moment, and then thrust it into his bosom; but in a moment, as if by a counter impulse, drew it forth again, let it flutter to the ground, following it with his eyes, shook his head with an amused air, half of defiance and half of discomfiture, turned, drew himself into the saddle, and with one hand laid upon another on the saddle-bow, and his eyes resting on them in meditation, passed finally out of sight.

Here, then, in this lone old Creole cottage, Mary was tarrying, prisoner of hope, coming out at all hours of the day, and scanning the wide view, first with only her hand to shade her brow, and then with the old ship's-glass, Alice often standing by and looking up at this extraordinary toy with unspoken wonder. All that Mary could tell her of things seeable through it could never persuade the child to risk her own eye at either end of it. So Mary would look again and see, out in the prairie, in the morning, the reed birds, the marsh hen, the blackbirds, the sparrows, the starlings with their red and yellow epaulets, rising and fluttering and sinking again among the lilies and mallows, and the white crane, paler than a ghost, wading in the grassy shallows. She saw the ravening garfish leap from the bayou, and the mullet in shining hundreds spatter away to left and right; and the fisherman and the shrimp-catcher in their canoes come gliding up the glassy stream, riding down the water-lilies that rose again behind, and shook the drops from their crowns like water sprites. Here and there, farther out,

she saw the little cat-boats of the neighbouring village crawling along the edge of the lake, taking their timid morning cruises. And far away she saw the titanic clouds; but on the horizon, no sail.

In the evening she would see mocking-birds coming out of the savannah and flying into the live-oaks. A summer duck might dart from the cypresses, speed across the wide green level, and become a swerving, vanishing speck on the sky. The heron might come round the bayou's bend, and suddenly take fright and fly back again. The rattling kingfisher might come up the stream, and the blue crane sail silently through the purple haze that hung between the swamp and the bayou. She would see the gulls, grey and white, on the margin of the lake, the sun setting beyond its western end, and the sky and water turning all beautiful tints; and every now and then, low down along the cool, wrinkling waters, passed across the round eye of the glass the broad, downward-curved wing of the pelican. But when she ventured to lift the glass to the horizon, she swept it from east to west in vain. No sail.

"Dawn't I tell you no use look? Peter dawn't comin' in day-time, nohow."

But on the fifth morning Mary had hardly made her appearance on the veranda, and had not ventured near the spy-glass yet, when the old man said—

"She rain back in swamp las' night; can smell."

"How do you feel, this morning?" asked Mary, facing around from her first glance across the waters. He did not heed.

"See dat win'?" he asked, lifting one hand a little from the top of his staff.

"Yes," responded Mary, eagerly; "why, it's—hasn't it—changed?"

"Yes, change' las' night 'fo' went to bed."

The old man's manner betrayed his contempt for one who could be interested in such a change, and yet not know when it took place.

"Why, then," began Mary, and started as if to take down the glass.

"What you doin'?" demanded its owner. "Better let glass 'lone; fool' wid him enough."

Mary flushed, and, with a smile of resentful apology, was about to reply when he continued—

"What you want glass for? Dare Peter' schooner—right dare in bayou. What want glass for? Can't see schooner hundred yard' off 'dout glass?" And he turned away his poor wabbling head in disgust.

Mary looked an instant at two bare, rakish yellow poles showing out against the clump of cypresses, and the trim little white hull and apple-green deck from which they sprung, then clasped her hands and ran into the house.

LVIII.

A GOLDEN SUNSET.

DR. SEVIER came to Richling's room one afternoon, and handed him a sealed letter. The post-mark was blurred, but it was easy still to read the abbreviation of the State's name—Kentucky. It had come by way of New York and the sea. The sick man reached out for it with avidity from the large bed in which he sat bolstered up. He tore it open with unsteady fingers, and sought the signature.

"It 's from a lawyer."

"An old acquaintance?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes," responded Richling, his eyes glancing eagerly along the lines. "Mary 's in the Confederate lines!—Mary and Alice!" The hand that held the letter dropped to his lap. "It doesn't say a word about how she got through!"

"But *where* did she get through?" asked the physician. "Whereabouts is she now?"

"She got through away up to the eastward of Corinth, Mississippi. Doctor, she may be within fifty miles of us this very minute! Do you think they 'll give her a pass to come in?"

"They may, Richling; I hope they will."

"I think I'd get well if she'd come," said the invalid. But his friend made no answer.

A day or two afterward—it was drawing to the close of a beautiful afternoon in early May—Dr. Sevier came into the room and stood at a window, looking out. Madame Zénobie sat by the bedside softly fanning the patient. Richling, with his eyes, motioned her to retire. She smiled and nodded approvingly, as if to say that that was just what she was about to propose, and went out, shutting the door with just sound enough to announce her departure to Dr. Sevier.

He came from the window to the bedside and sat down. The sick man looked at him with a feeble eye, and said, in little more than a whisper—

"Mary and Alice——"

"Yes?" said the Doctor.

"If they don't come to-night they'll be too late."

"God knows, my dear boy."

"Doctor——"

"What, Richling?"

"Did you ever try to guess——"

"Guess what, Richling?"

"*His* use of my life."

"Why, yes, my poor boy, I have tried. But I only make out its use to me."

The sick man's eye brightened.

"Has it been?"

The Doctor nodded. He reached out and took the wasted hand in his. It tried to answer his pressure. The invalid spoke.

"I'm glad you told me that before—before it was too late."

"Are you, my dear boy? Shall I tell you more?"

"Yes," the sick man huskily replied; "oh yes."

"Well, Richling,—you know we're great cowards about saying such things; it's a part of our poor human weakness and distrust of each other, and the emptiness of words,—but—lately—only just here, very lately, I've learned to call the meekest, lovingest One that ever trod our earth, Master; and it's been your life, my dear fellow, that has taught me." He pressed the sick man's hand slowly and tremulously, then let it go, but continued to caress it in a tender, absent way, looking on the floor as he spoke on.

"Richling, Nature herself appoints some men to poverty and some to riches. God throws the poor upon our charge—in mercy to *us*. Couldn't He take care of them without us if He wished? Are they not His? It's easy for the poor to feel, when they are helped by us, that the rich are a godsend to them; but they don't see, and many of their helpers don't see, that the poor are a godsend to the rich. They're set over against each other to keep pity and mercy and charity in the human heart. If every one were entirely able to take care of himself, we'd turn to stone." The speaker ceased.

"Go on," whispered the listener.

"That will never be," continued the Doctor. "God Almighty will never let us find a way to quite abolish poverty. Riches don't always bless the man they come to, but they bless the world. And so with poverty; and it's no contemptible commission, Richling, to be appointed by God to bear that blessing to mankind which keeps its brotherhood universal. See, now,"—he looked up with a gentle

smile,—"from what a distance He brought our two hearts together. Why, Richling, the man that can make the rich and poor love each other will make the world happier than it has ever been since man fell."

"Go on," whispered Richling.

"No," said the Doctor.

"Well, now, Doctor—*I* want to say—something." The invalid spoke with a weak and broken utterance, with many breaks and starts that we may set aside.

"For a long time," he said, beginning as if half in soliloquy, "I couldn't believe I was coming to this early end, simply because I didn't see why I should. I know that was foolish. I thought my hardships——" He ceased entirely, and, when his strength would allow, resumed—

"I thought they were sent in order that when I should come to fortune I might take part in correcting some evils that are strangely overlooked."

The Doctor nodded, and after a moment of rest Richling said again—

"But now I see—that is not my work. May be it is Mary's. May be it's my little girl's."

"Or mine," murmured the Doctor.

"Yes, Doctor, I've been lying here to-day thinking of something I never thought of before, though I dare say you have, often. There could be no art of healing till the earth was full of graves. It is by shipwreck that we learn to build ships. All our safety—all our betterment—is secured by our knowledge of others' disasters that need not have happened had they only *known*. Will you—finish my mission?" The sick man's hand softly grasped the hand that lay upon it. And the Doctor responded—

"How shall I do that, Richling?"

"Tell my story."

"But I don't know it all, Richling."

"I'll tell you all that's behind. You know I'm a native of Kentucky. My name is not Richling. I belong to one of the proudest, most distinguished families in that State or in all the land. Until I married I never knew an ungrateful wish. I think my bringing-up, not to be wicked, was as bad as could be. It was based upon the idea that I was always to be master and never servant. I was to go through life with soft hands. I was educated to know, but not to do. When I left school my parents let me travel. They would have let me do anything except work. In the West—in Milwaukee—I met Mary. It was by mere chance. She was poor, but cultivated and refined; trained—you know—for knowing, not doing. I loved her and courted her, and she encouraged my suit, under the idea, you know, again,"—he smiled faintly and sadly,—"that it was nobody's business but ours. I offered my hand and was accepted. But when I came to announce our engagement to my family, they warned me that if I married her they would disinherit and disown me."

"What was their reason, Richling?"

"Nothing."

"But, Richling, they had a reason of some sort."

"Nothing in the world but that Mary was a Northern girl. Simple sectional prejudice. I didn't tell Mary. I didn't think they would do it, but I knew Mary would refuse to put me to the risk. We married, and they carried out their threat."

The Doctor uttered a low exclamation, and both were silent.

"Doctor," began the sick man once more.

"Yes, Richling."

"I suppose you never looked into the case of a man who needed help but you were sure to find that some one thing was the key to all his troubles; did you?"

The Doctor was silent still.

"I 'll give you the key to mine, Doctor: I took up the gage thrown down by my family as though it were thrown down by society at large. I said I would match pride with pride. I said I would go among strangers, take a new name, and make it as honourable as the old. I saw Mary didn't think it wise; but she believed whatever I did was best, and"—he smiled and whispered—"I thought so too. I suppose my troubles have more than one key, but that 's the outside one. Let me rest a little.

"Doctor, I die nameless. I had a name, a good name, and only too proud a one. It 's mine still. I 've never tarnished it—not even in prison. I will not stain it now by disclosing it. I will carry it with me to God's throne."

The whisperer ceased, exhausted. The Doctor rested an elbow on a knee and laid his face in his hand. Presently Richling moved, and he raised a look of sad inquiry.

"Bury me here in New Orleans, Doctor, will you?"

"Why, Richling?"

"Well,—this has been—my—battle-ground. I 'd like to be buried on the field—like the other

soldiers. Not that I 've been a good one; but—I want to lie where you can point to me as you tell my story. If it could be so, I should like to lie in sight—of that old prison."

The Doctor brushed his eyes with his handkerchief and wiped his brow.

"Doctor," said the invalid again, "will you read me just four verses in the Bible?"

"Why, yes, my boy, as many as you wish to hear."

"No, only four." His free hand moved for the book that lay on the bed, and presently the Doctor read—

"'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;'

"'Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

"'But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

"'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'"

"There," whispered the sick man, and rested with a peaceful look on all his face. "It—doesn't mean wisdom in general, Doctor,—such as Solomon asked for."

"Doesn't it?" said the other, meekly.

"No. It means the wisdom necessary to let—patience—have her perf——. I was a long time—getting anywhere near that.

"Doctor,—do you remember how fond—Mary was of singing—all kinds of—little old songs?"

"Of course I do, my dear boy."

"Did you ever sing,—Doctor?"

"Oh! my dear fellow, I never did really sing, and I haven't uttered a note since—for twenty years."

"Can't you sing—ever so softly—just a verse—of—'I 'm a Pilgrim'?"

"I—I—it 's impossible, Richling, old fellow. I don't know either the words or the tune. I never sing." He smiled at himself through his tears.

"Well, all right," whispered Richling. He lay with closed eyes for a moment, and then, as he opened them, breathed faintly through his parted lips the words, spoken, not sung, while his hand feebly beat the imagined cadence—

"'The sun shines bright in my old Kentucky home.
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay;
The corn-tops are ripe, and the meadows are in bloom,
And the birds make music all the day.'"

The Doctor hid his face in his hand and all was still.

By-and-by there came a whisper again. The Doctor raised his head.

"Doctor, there 's one thing——"

"Yes, I know there is, Richling."

"Doctor,—I 've been a poor stick of a husband."

"I never knew a good one, Richling."

"Doctor, you 'll be a friend to Mary?"

The Doctor nodded; his eyes were full.

The sick man drew from his breast a small ambrotype, pressed it to his lips, and poised it in his trembling fingers. It was the likeness of the little Alice. He turned his eyes to his friend.

"I didn't need Mary's. But this is all I've ever seen of my little girl. To-morrow at daybreak,—it will be just at daybreak,—when you see that I've passed, I want you to lay this here on my breast. Then fold my hands upon it——"

His speech was arrested. He seemed to hearken an instant.

"Doctor," he said, with excitement in his eye and sudden strength of voice, "what is that I hear?"

"I don't know," replied his friend; "one of the servants, probably, down in the hall." But he, too, seemed to have been startled. He lifted his head. There was a sound of some one coming up the stairs in haste.

"Doctor."

The Doctor was rising from his chair.

"Lie still, Richling."

But the sick man suddenly sat erect.

"Doctor—it 's—O Doctor, I——"

The door flew open; there was a low outcry from the threshold, a moan of joy from the sick man, a throwing wide of arms, and a rush to the bedside, and John and Mary Richling—and the little Alice too——

Come, Doctor Sevier; come out and close the door.

"Strangest thing on earth!" I once heard a physician say,—"the mysterious power that the dying so often have to fix the very hour of their approaching end!" It was so in John Richling's case. It was as he said. Had Mary and Alice not

come when they did, they would have been too late. He "tarried but a night;" and at the dawn Mary uttered the bitter cry of the widow, and Doctor Sevier closed the eyes of one who had committed no fault,—against this world, at least,—save that he had been by nature a pilgrim and a stranger in it.

LIX.

AFTERGLOW.

MARY, with Alice holding one hand, flowers in the other, was walking one day down the central avenue of the old Girod cemetery, breaking the silence of the place only by the soft grinding of her footsteps on the shell walk, and was just entering a transverse alley, when she stopped.

Just at hand a large, broad woman, very plainly dressed, was drawing back a single step from the front of a tomb, and dropping her hands from a coarse vase of flowers that she had that moment placed on the narrow stone shelf under the tablet. The blossoms touched, without hiding, the newly-cut name. She had hung a little plaster crucifix against it from above. She must have heard the footfall so near by and marked its stoppage; but with the oblivion common to the practisers of her religion, she took no outward notice. She crossed herself, sank upon her knees, and, with her eyes upon the shrine she had made, remained thus. The tears ran down Mary's face. It was Madame Zénobie. They went and lived together.

The name of the street where their house stood

has slipped me, as has that of the clean, unfrequented round-stoned way up which one looked from the small cottage's veranda, and which, running down to their old arched gate, came there to an end, as if that were a pretty place to stop at in the shade until evening. Grass grows now, as it did then, between the round stones, and in the towering sycamores of the reddened brick sidewalk the long, quavering note of the cicada parts the wide summer noonday silence. The stillness yields to little else save now and then the tinkle of a mule-bell where in the distance the softly rumbling street-car invites one to the centre of the town's activities, or the voice of some fowl that, having laid an egg, is asserting her right to the credit of it. Some forty feet back, within a mossy brick wall that stands waist-high, surmounted by a white, open fence, the green wooden balls on top of whose posts are full eight feet above the sidewalk, the cottage stands high up among a sweet confusion of pale purple and pink crape myrtles, oleanders white and red, and the bristling leaves and plumes of white bells of the Spanish bayonet, all in the shade of lofty magnolias and one great pecan.

"And this is my little Alice," said Doctor Sevier, with gentle gravity, as on his first visit to the place he shook hands with Mary at the top of the veranda stairs and laid his fingers upon the child's forehead. He smiled into her uplifted face as her eyes examined his, and stroked the little crown as she turned her glance silently upon her mother, as if to inquire if this were a trustworthy person. Mary led the way to chairs at the veranda's end where the

south breeze fanned them, and Alice retreated to her mother's side until her silent question should be settled.

It was still May. They spoke the praises of the day whose sun was just setting. And Mary commended the house, the convenience of its construction, its salubrity; and also, and especially, the excellence and goodness of Madame Zénobie. What a complete and satisfactory arrangement! Was it not? Did not the Doctor think so?

But the Doctor's affirmative responses were unfrequent and quite without enthusiasm; and Mary's face, wearing more cheer than was felt within, betrayed, moreover, the feeling of one who, having done the best she knew, falls short of commendation.

She was once more in deep black. Her face was pale, and some of its lines had yielded up a part of their excellence. The outward curves of the rose had given place to the inward curves of the lily—nay, hardly all that; for as she had never had the full red queenliness of the one, neither had she now the severe sanctitude of the other; that soft glow of inquiry, at once so blithe and so self-contained, so modest and so courageous, humble yet free, still played about her saddened eyes and in her tones. Through the glistening sadness of those eyes smiled resignation; and although the Doctor plainly read care about them and about the mouth, it was a care that was forbearing to feed upon itself or to take its seat on her brow. The brow was the old one; that is, the young. The joy of life's morning was gone from it for ever, but a chastened hope was there, and one could see peace hovering just above it, as though it

might in time alight. Such were the things that divided her austere friend's attention as she sat before him, seeking, with timid smiles and interrogative argument, for this new beginning of life some heartiness of approval from him.

"Doctor," she plucked up the courage to say at last, with a geniality that scantily hid the inner distress, "you don't seem pleased."

"I can't say I am, Mary. You've provided for things in sight; but I see no provision for unseen contingencies. They're sure to come, you know. How are you going to meet them?"

"Well," said Mary, with slow, smiling caution, "there's my two thousand dollars that you've put at interest for me."

"Why, no; you've already counted the interest on that as part of your necessary income."

"Doctor, 'the Lord will provide,' will He not?"

"No."

"Why, Doctor!——"

"No, Mary; you've got to provide. He's not going to set aside the laws of Nature to cover our improvidence. That would be to break faith with all creation for the sake of one or two creatures."

"No; but still, Doctor,—without breaking the laws of Nature,—He will provide. It's in His Word."

"Yes, and it ought to be in His Word—not in ours. It's for Him to say to us, not for us to say to Him. But there's another thing, Mary."

"Yes, sir."

"It's this. But first I'll say plainly you've passed through the fires of poverty and they haven't

hurt you. You have one of those imperishable natures that fire can't stain or warp."

"O Doctor, how absurd!" said Mary, with bright genuineness and a tear in either eye. She drew Alice closer.

"Well, then, I do see two ill effects," replied the Doctor. "In the first place, as I've just tried to show you, you have caught a little of the *recklessness* of the poor."

"I was born with it," exclaimed Mary, with amusement.

"May be so," replied her friend; "at any rate you show it." He was silent.

"But what was the other?" asked Mary.

"Why, as to that, I may mistake; but—you seem inclined to settle down and be satisfied with poverty."

"Having food and raiment," said Mary, smiling with some archness, "to be therewith content."

"Yes, but"—the physician shook his head—"that doesn't mean to be satisfied. It's one thing to be content with God's providence, and it's another to be satisfied with poverty. There's not one in a thousand that I'd venture to say it to. He wouldn't understand the fine difference. But you will. I'm sure you do."

"Yes, I do."

"I know you do. You know poverty has its temptations, and warping influences, and debasing effects, just as truly as riches have. See how it narrows our usefulness. Not always, it is true. Sometimes our best usefulness keeps us poor. That's poverty with a good excuse. But that's not poverty satisfying, Mary——"

"No, of course not," said Mary, exhibiting a degree of distress that the Doctor somehow overlooked.

"It 's merely," said he, half extending his open palm—"it 's merely poverty accepted, as a good soldier accepts the dust and smut that are a necessary part of the battle. Now, here 's this little girl." —As his open white hand pointed toward Alice she shrank back; but the Doctor seemed blind this afternoon and drove on.—"In a few years—it will not seem like any time at all—she 'll be half grown up; she 'll have wants that ought to be supplied."

"Oh! don't," exclaimed Mary, and burst into a flood of tears; and the Doctor, while she hid them from her child, sat silently loathing his own stupidity.

"Please don't mind it," said Mary, stanching the flow. "You were not so badly mistaken. I wasn't satisfied, but I was about to surrender." She smiled at herself and her warlike figure of speech.

He looked away, passed his hand across his forehead, and must have muttered audibly his self-reproach; for Mary looked up again with a faint gleam of the old radiance in her face, saying—

"I 'm glad you didn't let me do it. I 'll not do it. I 'll take up the struggle again. Indeed, I had already thought of one thing I could do, but I—I—, in fact, Doctor, I thought you might not like it."

"What was it?"

"It was teaching in the public schools. They 're in the hands of the military government, I am told. Are they not?"

"Yes."

"Still," said Mary, speaking rapidly, "I say I'll keep up the——"

But the Doctor lifted his hand—

"No, no. There's to be no more struggle."

"No?" Mary tried to look pleasantly incredulous.

"No; and you're not going to be put upon anybody's bounty, either. No. What I was going to say about this little girl here was this:—her name is Alice, is it?"

"Yes."

The mother dropped an arm around the child, and both she and Alice looked timidly at the questioner.

"Well, by that name, Mary, I claim the care of her."

The colour mounted to Mary's brows, but the Doctor raised a finger—

"I mean, of course, Mary, only in so far as such care can go without molesting your perfect motherhood, and all its offices and pleasures."

Her eyes filled again and her lips parted, but the Doctor was not going to let her reply.

"Don't try to debate it, Mary. You must see you have no case. Nobody's going to take her from you, nor do any other of the foolish things, I hope, that are so often done in such cases. But you've called her Alice, and Alice she must be. I don't propose to take care of her for you——"

"Oh no; of course not," interjected Mary.

"No," said the Doctor; "you'll take care of her for me. I intended it from the first. And that brings up another point. You mustn't teach school. No. I have something else—something better—to suggest. Mary, you and John have been a kind of blessing to me——"

She would have interrupted with expressions of astonishment and dissent, but he would not hear them.

"I think I ought to know best about that," he said. "Your husband taught me a great deal, I think. I want to put some of it into practice. We had a—an understanding, you might say—one day towards the—end,—that I should do for him some of the things he had so longed and hoped to do—for the poor and the unfortunate."

"I know," said Mary, the tears dropping down her face.

"He told you?" asked the Doctor.

She nodded.

"Well," resumed the Doctor, "those may not be his words precisely, but it's what they meant to me. And I said I'd do it. But I shall need assistance. I'm a medical practitioner. I attend the sick. But I see a great deal of other sorts of sufferers; and I can't stop for them."

"Certainly not," said Mary, softly.

"No," said he; "I can't make the inquiries and investigations about them and study them, and all that kind of thing, as one should if one's help is going to be help. I can't turn aside for all that. A man must have one direction, you know. But you could look after those things——"

"I?"

"Certainly. You could do it just as I—just as —John—would wish to see it done. You're just the kind of person to do it right."

"O Doctor, don't say so. I'm not fitted for it at all."

"I'm sure you are, Mary. You're fitted by character and outward disposition, and by experience. You're full of cheer——"

She tearfully shook her head. But he insisted.

"You will be—for *his* sake, as you once said to me. Don't you remember?"

She remembered. She recalled all he wished her to: the prayer she had made that whenever death should part her husband and her, he might not be the one left behind. Yes, she remembered; and the Doctor spoke again—

"Now, I invite you to make this your principal business. I'll pay you for it, regularly and well, what I think it's worth; and it's worth no trifle. There's not one in a thousand that I'd trust to do it, woman or man; but I know you will do it all and do it well, without any nonsense. And if you want to look at it so, Mary, you can just consider that it's John doing it, all the time—for, in fact, that's just what it is. It beats sewing, Mary, or teaching school, or making preserves,—I think."

"Yes," said Mary, looking down on Alice and stroking her head.

"You can stay right here where you are, with Madame Zénobie, as you had planned; but you'll give yourself to this better work. I'll give you a *carte blanche*. Only one mistake I charge you not to make; don't go and come from day to day on the assumption that only the poor are poor and need counsel and attention."

"I know that would be a mistake," said Mary.

"But I mean more than that," continued the Doctor. "You must keep a hold on the rich and

comfortable and happy. You want to be a medium between the two, identified with both as completely as possible. It's a hard task, Mary. It will take all your cunning."

"And more too," replied she, half musing.

"You know," said the Doctor, "I'm not to appear in the matter, of course; I'm not to be mentioned; that must be one of the conditions."

Mary smiled at him through her welling eyes.

"I'm not fit to do it," she said, folding the wet spots of her handkerchief under. "But still, I'd rather not refuse. If I might try it, I'd like to do so. If I could do it well, it would be a finer monument—to *him*——"

"Than brass or marble," said Dr. Sevier. "Yes, more to his liking."

"Well," said Mary again, "if you think I can do it, I'll try it."

"Very well. There's one place you can go to, to begin with, to-morrow morning, if you choose. I'll give you the number. It's just across here in Casa Calvo Street."

"Narcisse's aunt?" asked Mary, with a soft gleam of amusement.

"Yes. Have you been there already?"

She had; but she only said—

"There's one thing that I'm afraid will go against me, Doctor, almost everywhere." She lifted a timid look.

The Doctor looked at her inquiringly, and in his private thought said that it was certainly not her face or voice.

"Ah!" he said, as he suddenly recollected.

"Yes; I had forgotten. You mean your being a Union woman."

"Yes. It seems to me they'll be sure to find it out. Don't you think it will interfere?"

The Doctor mused.

"I forgot that," he repeated, and mused again. "You can't blame us, Mary; we're at white heat——"

"Indeed I don't!" said Mary, with eager earnestness.

He reflected yet again.

"But—I don't know, either. It may be not as great a drawback as you think. Here's Madame Zénobie, for instance——"

Madame Zénobie was just coming up the front steps from the garden, pulling herself up upon the veranda wearily by the balustrade. She came forward, and with graceful acknowledgment accepted the physician's outstretched hand and courtesied.

"Here's Madame Zénobie, I say; you seem to get along with her."

Mary smiled again, looked up at the standing quadroon, and replied in a low voice—

"Madame Zénobie is for the Union herself."

"Ah! no-o-o!" exclaimed the good woman, with an alarmed face. She lifted her shoulders and extended what Narcisse would have called the han' of rep-u-diation; then turned away her face, lifted up her underlip with disrelish, and asked the surrounding atmosphere—"What I got to do wid Union? Nuttin' do wid Union—nuttin' do wid confédéracie!" She moved away, addressing the garden and the house by turns. "Ah! no!" She went in

by the front door, talking Creole French until she was beyond hearing.

Dr. Sevier reached out toward the child at Mary's knee. Here was one who was neither for nor against, nor yet a fear-constrained neutral. Mary pushed her persuasively toward the Doctor, and Alice let herself be lifted to his lap.

"I used to be for it myself," he said, little dreaming he would one day be for it again. As the child sank back into his arm, he noticed a miniature of her father hanging from her neck. He took it into his fingers, and all were silent while he looked long upon the face.

By-and-by he asked Mary for an account of her wanderings. She gave it. Many of the experiences that had been hard and dangerous enough when she was passing through them, were full of drollery when they came to be told, and there was much quiet amusement over them. The sunlight faded out, the cicadas hushed their long-drawn, ear-splitting strains, and the moon had begun to shine in the shadowy garden when Dr. Sevier at length let Alice down and rose to take his lonely homeward way, leaving Mary to Alice's prattle, and, when that was hushed in slumber, to gentle tears and whispered thanksgivings above the little head.

LX.

"YET SHALL HE LIVE."

We need not follow Mary through her ministrations. Her office was no sinecure. It took not only much labour, but, as the Doctor had expected, it took all her cunning. True, nature and experience had equipped her for such work; but for all that there was an art to be learned, and time and again there were cases of mental and moral decrepitude or deformity that baffled all her skill until her skill grew up to them, which in some cases it never did. The greatest tax of all was to seem, and to be, unprofessional; to avoid regarding her work in quantity, and to be simply, merely, in every case, a personal friend; not to become known as a benevolent itinerary, but only a kind and thoughtful neighbour. Blessed word! not benefactor—neighbour!

She had no schemes for helping the unfortunate by multitude. Possibly on that account her usefulness was less than it might have been. But I am not sure; for they say her actual words and deeds were but the seed of ultimate harvests; and that others, moreover, seeing her light shine so brightly along this seemingly narrow path, and moved to

imitate her, took that other and broader way, and so both fields were reaped.

But, I say, we need not follow her steps. They would lead deviously through ill-smelling military hospitals, and into buildings that had once been the counting-rooms of Carondelet Street cotton merchants, but were now become the prisons of soldiers in grey. One of these places, restored after the war as a cotton factor's counting-room again, had, until a few years ago, a queer, clumsy patch in the plastering of one wall, near the base-board. Some one had made a rough inscription on it with a cotton sampler's marking brush. It commemorates an incident. Mary by some means became aware beforehand that this incident was going to occur; and one of the most trying struggles of conscience she ever had in her life was that in which she debated with herself one whole night whether she ought to give her knowledge to others or keep it to herself. She kept it. In fact, she said nothing until the war was all over and done, and she never was quite sure whether her silence was right or wrong. And when she asked Dr. Sevier if he thought she had done wrong, he asked—

"You knew it was going to take place, and kept silence?"

"Yes," said Mary.

"And you want to know whether you did right?"

"Yes. I'd like to know what you think."

He sat very straight and said not a word nor changed a line of his face. She got no answer at all.

The inscription was as follows—I used to see it every work-day of the week for years—it may be there yet—190 Common Street, first flight back office :—

OCT. 14, 1864.

17 CONFEDERATE

PRISONERS ESCAPED

THROUGH THIS HOLE.

But we move too fast. Let us go back into the war for a moment longer. Mary pursued her calling. The most of it she succeeded in doing in a very sunshiny way. She carried with her, and left behind her, cheer, courage, hope. Yet she had a widow's heart, and whenever she took a widow's hand in hers, and oftentimes alone or against her sleeping child's bedside, she had a widow's tears. But this work—or these works—she made each particular ministration seem as if it were the only one—these works, that she might never have had the opportunity to perform had her nest-mate never been taken from her, seemed to keep John near. Almost, sometimes, he seemed to walk at her side in her errands of mercy, or to spread above her the arms of benediction. And so, even the bitter was sweet, and she came to believe that never before had widow such blessed commutation.

One day a short, slight Confederate prisoner, newly brought in and hobbling about the place where he was confined, with a vile bullet-hole in his foot, came up to her and said—

"Allow me, madam,—did that man call you by your right name just now?"

Mary looked at him. She had never seen him before.

"Yes, sir," she said.

She could see the gentleman, under much rags and dirt.

"Are you Mrs. John Richling?"

A look of dismay came into his face as he asked the grave question.

"Yes, sir," replied Mary.

His voice dropped, and he asked, with subdued haste—

"Ith it pothible you 're in mourning for him?"

She nodded.

It was the little rector. He had somehow got it into his head that preachers ought to fight, and this was one of the results. Mary went away quickly and told Dr. Sevier. The Doctor went to the commanding general. It was a great humiliation to do so, he thought. There was none worse, those days, in the eyes of the people. He craved and got the little man's release on parole. A fortnight later, as Dr. Sevier was sitting at the breakfast-table, with the little rector at its opposite end, he all at once rose to his full attenuated height, with a frown and then a smile, and, tumbling the chair backward behind him, exclaimed—

"Why, Laura!" for it was that one of his two gay young nieces who stood in the doorway. The banker's wife followed in just behind, and was presently saying, with the prettiest heartiness, that Dr. Sevier looked no older than the day they met the

Florida general at dinner years before. She had just come in from the Confederacy, smuggling her son of eighteen back to the city to save him from the conscript officers, and Laura had come with her. And when the clergyman got his crutches into his armpits and stood on one foot, and he and Laura both blushed as they shook hands, the Doctor knew that she had come to nurse her wounded lover. That she might do this without embarrassment, they got married, and were thereupon as vexed with themselves as they could be under the circumstances that they had not done it four or five years before. Of course there was no parade; but Dr. Sevier gave a neat little dinner. Mary and Laura were its designers; Madame Zénobie was the master builder and made the gumbo. One word about the war whose smoke was over all the land would have spoiled the broth. But no such word was spoken.

It happened that the company was almost the same as that which had sat down in brighter days to that dinner which the banker's wife recalled with so much pleasure. She and her husband and son were guests; also that Sister Jane, of whom they had talked, a woman of real goodness and rather unrelieved sweetness; also her sister and bankrupted brother-in-law. The brother-in-law mentioned several persons who, he said, once used to be very cordial to him and his wife, but now did not remember them; and his wife chid him, with the air of a fellow-martyr; but they could not spoil the tender gladness of the occasion.

"Well, Doctor," said the banker's wife, looking quite the old lady now, "I suppose your lonely days

are over now that Laura and her husband are to keep house for you."

"Yes," said the Doctor.

But the very thought of it made him more lonely than ever.

"It 's a very pleasant and sensible arrangement," said the lady, looking very practical and confidential; "Laura has told me all about it. It 's just the thing for them and for you."

"I think so, ma'am," replied Dr. Sevier, and tried to make his statement good.

"I 'm sure of it," said the lady, very sweetly and gaily, and made a faint time-to-go beckon with her fan to her husband, to whom, in the farther drawing-room, Laura and Mary stood talking, each with an arm about the other's waist.

LXI.

PEACE.

It came with tears. But ah! it lifted such an awful load from the hearts even of those who loved the lost cause. Husbands snatched their wives once more to their bosoms, and the dear, brave, swarthy, rough-bearded, grey-jacketed boys were caught again in the wild arms of mothers and sisters. Everywhere there was glad, tearful kissing. Everywhere? Alas for the silent lips that remained unkissed, and the arms that remained empty! And alas for those to whom peace came too suddenly and too soon! Poor Narcisse!

His salary still continues. So does his aunt.

The Ristofalos came back all together. How delighted Mrs. Colonel Ristofalo—I say Mrs. *Colonel* Ristofalo—was to see Mary! And how impossible it was, when they sat down together for a long talk, to avoid every moment coming back to the one subject of "him."

"Yes, ye see, there bees thim as is *called* col-o-nels, whin in fact they bees only *liftinant* col-o-nels. Yes. But it's not so wid him. And he's no different from the plain Raphael Ristofalah of eight year ago—the same perfict gintleman that he was when he sold

b'iled eggs!" And the colonel's "lady" smiled a gay triumph that gave Mary a new affection for her.

Sister Jane bowed to the rod of an inscrutable Providence. She could not understand how the Confederacy could fail and justice still be justice; so, without understanding, she left it all to Heaven, and clung to her faith. Her brother-in-law never recovered his fortunes nor his sweetness. He could not bend his neck to the conqueror's yoke; he went in search of liberty to Brazil—or was it Honduras? Little matter which now, for he died there, both he and his wife, just as their faces were turning again homeward, and it was dawning upon them once more that there is no land like Dixie in all the wide world over.

The little rector, thanks, he says, to the skill of Dr. Sevier, recovered perfectly the use of his mangled foot, so that he even loves long walks. I was out walking with him one sunset hour in the autumn of —if I remember aright—1870, when whom should we spy but our good Kate Ristofalo, out driving in her family carriage. The cherubs were beside her, —strong, handsome boys. Mike held the reins; he was but thirteen, but he looked full three years better than that, and had evidently employed the best tailor in St. Charles Street to fit his rather noticeable clothes. His mother had changed her mind about his being a bruiser, though there isn't a doubt he had a derringer in one or another of his pockets. No, she was proposing to make him a doctor—"a surgeon," she said; "and thin, if there bees another war——" She was for making every edge cut.

She did us the honour to stop the carriage and drive up to the curbstone for a little chat. Her spirits were up, for Colonel Ristofalo had just been made a city councilman by a rousing majority.

We expressed our regret not to see Raphael himself in the family group enjoying the exquisite air.

"Ha, ha! He ride out fur pleasure?"—And then, with sudden gravity,—"Aw naw, sur! He 's too busy. Much use ut is to be married to a public man! Ah! surs, I 'm mighty tired of ud, now I tell ye!" Yet she laughed again, without betraying much fatigue. "And how 's Dr. Sevier?"

"He 's well," said the clergyman.

"And Mrs. Richling?"

"She 's well too."

Kate looked at the little rector out of the corners of her roguish Irish eyes, a killing look, and said—

"Ye 're sure the both o' thim bees well?"

"Yes, quite well," replied he, ignoring the inane effort at jest. She nodded a blithe good-day, and rolled on toward the Lake, happy as the harvest weather, and with a kind heart for all the world. We walked on, and after the walk I dined with him. Dr. Sevier's place was vacant, and we talked of him. The prettiest piece of furniture in the dining-room was an extremely handsome child's high chair that remained, unused, against the wall. It was Alice's, and Alice was an almost daily visitor. It had come in almost simultaneously with Laura's marriage, and more and more frequently, as time had passed, the waiter had set it up to the table at the Doctor's right hand and lifted Golden-hair into it, until by-and-

by she had totally outgrown it. But she had not grown out of the place of favour at the table. In these later days she had become quite a school-girl, and the Doctor in his place at the table would often sit with a faint, continuous smile on his face that no one could bring there. but she, to hear her prattle about Madame Locquet, and the various girls at Madame Locquet's school.

"It's actually pathetic," said Laura, as we sat sipping our coffee after the meal, "to see how he idolises that child." Alice had just left the room.

"Why don't he idolise the child's——" began her husband, in undertone, and did not have to finish to make us understand.

"He does," murmured the smiling wife.

"Then why shouldn't he tell her so?"

"My dear!" objected the wife, very softly and prettily.

"I don't mean to speak lightly," responded the husband, "but—they love each other; they suit each other; they complete each other; they don't feel their disparity of years; they're both so linked to Alice that it would break either heart over again to be separated from her. I don't see why——"

Laura shook her head, smiling in the gentle way that only the happy wives of good men have.

"It will never be."

What changes!

"The years creep slowly by——"

We seem to hear the old song yet. What changes!

Laura has put two more leaves into her dining-table. Her children fill three seats. Alice has another. It is she, now, not her chair, that is tall—and fair. Mary, too, has a seat at the same board. This is their home now. Her hair is turning all to silver. So early? Yes; but she is—she never was—so beautiful! They all see it—feel it; Dr. Sevier—the gentle, kind, straight old Doctor—most of all. And oh! when they two, who have never joined hands on this earth, go to meet John and Alice,—which God grant may be at one and the same time,—what weeping there will be among God's poor.

THE END.

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